

(1) Eastern Iranian ...

Afghans have exported 26\$ million worth of commodities to Iran in the same period.

"Some 151\$ million worth of Iranian goods were exported to Afghanistan in the last six months," said Davoud Shahraki, Head of Southern Khorassan's office of Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade on Saturday.

Some 26\$ million worth of Afghan goods were imported from Birjand and Mahiroud border crossings during the past six months, according to the official.

He criticized "lack of clear policies in Afghanistan" as well as Kabul's decisions to close three border markets with Iran in Southern Khorassan Province for a decline in bilateral trade exchanges.

Also on Saturday, Iranian Ambassador to Kabul Bahador Aminian said that his country's exports to Afghanistan are 3 times more than what it sends to 28 member states of the European Union, highlighting that trade with Afghanistan is of high value to Tehran. Last month, it was announced that Iran's export of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to Afghanistan from the border crossing of Doqaroon has increased by 4 times in the past 5 months since the start of the local calendar year on March 21

Exports of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from Iran's northeast to neighboring Afghanistan quadrupled in the past five months, Doqaroon Customs Director General Mohammad Kuh Gerda said on September 03.

"So far 98,417 tons of LNG were exported to Afghanistan through Doqaroon border customs, showing a four-time rise in export of such product in compare to the corresponding period last year," Kuh Gerda said.

Iran exported 44,929 tons of LNG to Afghanistan during the same period last year, he added.

10 trucks load Iran's LNG at Doqaroon Customs each day, heading for Afghanistan, according to the official.

%80 of the exported energy are made up of raffinate and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Kuh Gerda added, noting that %100 of Iran's energy exports to Herat in Afghanistan through Doqaroon Customs.

145,113 tons of LNG was loaded onto trucks and dispatched to Afghanistan from Doqaroon Customs last Iranian calendar year, ending on March 20.

"Doqaroon Customs capacity is 350,000 tons of LNG exports, that's why we have installed the most modern facilities there," its director general stressed.

In August, a senior energy delegation from Iran visited Kabul, in a bid to further increase energy cooperation between the two countries and to further discuss power supply to Afghanistan.

Iran is the main energy supplier of Afghanistan, providing the poor neighboring country with electricity, oil, oil products and gas. Due to Kabul's heavy dependence on energy supplies from Iran, the US is unable to affect the cross-border interactions and trade between the two countries. (FNA)

(2) FFEFA Head ...

building public trust in political processes in the country.

However, Jannat Khan Mangal, head of the State Builder election ticket led by Ashraf Ghani, said that Ehsanullah Hamidi, FFEFA head for Paktia province, participated in an electrifying event for Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, a presidential candidate, and spoke in his support.

He said such activities from a FFEFA official were in violation of the electoral law and other laws.

"We know Ehsanullah Hamidi who has been FFEFA member for the last few years. He was a FFEFA representative in the parliamentary election but he directly supported Dr. Abdullah Abdullah by attending his campaign event and delivered a speech in his support," he said.

Meanwhile, a civil society activist in Paktia, Abdul Raouf Sabit, told Pajhwok Afghan News that Ehsanullah Hamidi also held a job in the provincial education department besides being member of FFEFA.

Based on the electoral law, no government official has the right to participate in election campaigns, but Hamidi did so, he said.

"Hamidi is a campaigner of Abdullah's team in addition to leading FFEFA," he said.

Naqibullah Haidari, Independent Election Commission (IEC) head for Paktia said that FFEFA should be neutral about elections and should

honestly watch over the polls.

"It is a crime when an organization such as FFEFA campaigns for a specific person, because this organization should be impartial," he said.

On the other hand, Mumtaz Karkhel, a provincial council member of Paktia, said that FFEFA did not look neutral in the province.

He also said FFEFA head for the province had campaigned in favor of Dr. Abdullah Abdullah.

FFEFA head for Paktia, Ehsanullah Hamidi, confirmed a picture of Dr. Abdullah Abdullah with Paktia youth seen at Abdullah's house as real.

However, he said election campaigns had not started when the picture was taken and his aim to appear in the gathering was not to support someone. "I was not even aware about the agenda of the gathering, I came to the stage and told the audience that we want a transparent election so we do not face any crisis, I did not support any candidate," he said.

Hamidi said some figures attempted to rig the election in Paktia and that was the reason such accusations were made against him. (Pajhwok)

(3) TAPI Project ...

the project began during the Taliban regime. But its implementation inside Afghanistan required 9\$ billion to 12\$ billion investment.

The government was waiting for the parties interested in investment in the scheme, he said, adding: "A number of American companies in the past were interested in investing, but Ashgabat opposed the idea and said Turkmen firms would invest in the project inside Afghanistan." Turkmenistan currently faced with economic problems and lost interest in investment in the project," he said.

Work on the project in India, Turkmenistan and Pakistan has been completed. Once Afghanistan did its part, the supply of gas would be facilitated, he said.

"In order to do technical work on the project completed in Afghanistan, we are waiting for investors," the minister added.

Mir Rahman Rahmani, Wolesi Jirga speaker, asked economy, budget and audit commissions of the lower house to assess TAPI project and find reasons for the delay in practical work on it. (Pajhwok)

(4) WHO Provides ...

to Kandahar, medicine and logistics including emergency trauma kits and outpatient department service.

"WHO will try to keep up the momentum and coordinate to make sure the health emergency needs in Zabul are met," says Dr David Lai, Afghanistan Health Cluster Coordinator, "it is also important to re-iterate that we condemn the attacks on healthcare where not only the healthcare providers were victims, but also people who rely on the healthcare services became victims."

The provincial hospital was able to accommodate patient the next day in limited capacity. Together with partners, WHO is working with the local officials to further identify and prioritize healthcare needs and start to rebuild the hospital in the next five months. (Pajhwok)

(5) Activists Seek ...

the accusation that he intimidated the wife of the social council head.

He said if the allegation was true, the boy should not have been tortured in such a savage manner and the issue must have been followed legally.

"Iran calls itself an Islamic country. Is Islam says you beat a migrant or a labor, it is shameful that you call yourself a Muslim country," he remarked.

Spokesman for the Justice Seekers Association civil society group, Fazl Minallah Mumtaz, condemned the brutal beating of the young boy and called it against humanity. He said: "Iran! You call yourself the defence of the oppressed." (Pajhwok)

(6) Heratis Worried ...

medicines were smuggled and brought to the province by a number of powerful individuals and corrupt people.

He urged the government to take measures for preventing such medicines from reaching province.

On the other hand, Jilani Farhad, the governor's spokesman, said efforts were under way to stop smuggling of low quality drugs into Herat. (Pajhwok)

(7) Six Biometric ...

threats.

More than 9.6 million voters were registered with the Independent Election Commission to cast their votes

but the turnout was very low.

According to the IEC, nearly 2.7 million votes have been cast in the presidential elections across the country.

The preliminary results is scheduled to be announced on Oct. 19 and final ones on Nov. 7.

If none of the candidates win over 50 percent of votes in the first round, the two leading candidates will enter a runoff. (ATN)

(8) Security Forces ...

black clothes stormed the offices of Al-Arabiya, a Saudi-owned pan-Arab news channel on Abu Nawas Street, beat up some of the employees and smashed equipment before they fled, said Majed Hamid, the channel's Baghdad correspondent. Hamid said the station had been receiving threats for several days.

Gunmen also attacked the offices of Iraq's private Dajla and NRT news channels, according to employees at the stations. Both of those stations are privately owned.

Scrambling to contain the demonstrations, Iraqi leaders called an emergency session of parliament Saturday to discuss the protesters' demands. But they lacked a quorum due to a boycott called by influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of parliament's largest bloc. On Friday, al-Sadr called on Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi's government to resign and hold early elections, saying the shedding of blood of Iraqis "cannot be ignored." Abdul-Mahdi said in an address to the nation that the protesters' "legitimate demands" had been heard, but he defended the deadly response of security forces as a "bitter medicine" that was necessary for the country to swallow.

In a desperate attempt to curb the growing rallies, authorities blocked the internet Wednesday and imposed a round-the-clock curfew on Thursday. The curfew, ignored by protesters, was lifted at 5 a.m. Saturday, allowing shops to open and traffic to flow in most of Baghdad before the new demonstrations began.

As in previous days, protesters waited to gather until the afternoon, when temperatures were cooler and ensured greater participation, and security forces responded by opening fire.

Health and security officials said more than a dozen people were killed and about 40 wounded in the capital on Saturday when security forces opened fire during protests in various neighborhoods, including central Tahrir Square, which remained closed to cars, and around which special forces and army vehicles deployed in an operation that extended as far as 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) away. The forces also unleashed tear gas, said health, police and medical officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not allowed to brief reporters.

A protester who refused to be named for fear of repercussions said anti-riot police directly opened fire at the protesters. The military initially tried to stop the police but ultimately left the area, the protester said. In a smaller, peaceful rally earlier Saturday in the capital, demonstrators raised banners demanding the resignation of Abdul-Mahdi and an investigation into the killings of protesters.

Thousands of protesters also took to the streets in the southern cities of Nasiriyah and Diwaniyah, defying a curfew still in place there. In Diwaniyah, at least one protester was killed as demonstrators marched toward local government offices, a medical official and human rights official said. They did not provide details. In the restive city of Nasiriyah, demonstrators torched the offices of three political parties and a lawmaker. Security forces responded with gunfire, but there was no immediate word on casualties, said the officials, who described the protest as "very large."

Abdul Mahdi's office and Parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbusi have called on protest representatives to meet with them so they could hear their demands. In a televised meeting in parliament, al-Halbusi met with a group of Iraqis and tribal representatives, mostly in their 50s and older, to discuss the country's myriad problems. Al-Halbusi repeated promises to address unemployment and poverty.

But the promises did nothing to stop the unfolding street violence. The deadliest day was Friday, when 22 people were killed in Baghdad. Health officials said many of those victims were wounded in the head and chest. (Apnews)

(9) Tens of Thousands ...

There were no trees or vegetation

left on the steep, goat-eaten hillsides to stop the mudslides caused by the downpour.

"There are no big trees to hold the soil. And it's a big problem, both financial and real because (the mud) will come down on our heads," says George Maskalidis, who helps run Sustainable Samothraki Association, an environmental group.

Samothraki, in the northern Aegean Sea, is a two-hour ferry ride south of Alexandroupoli, a Greek city near the country's border with Turkey.

With just 3,000 inhabitants and hard to access, the island has largely missed out on Greece's tourism boom. Mountain herding is still a way of life here and despite trying for three decades, regional authorities have found it hard to build a local consensus on how to deal with the issue.

The goat population, meanwhile, soared fivefold to an estimated 75,000 by the late 1990s. Some parts of the countryside were simply nibbled away. The goat numbers have since dropped to below 50,000 as there is little left to graze on. But this has left the island in a trap. Most of its goats are malnourished and too scrawny to be used commercially for meat, animal feed is too expensive to maintain a sustainable business and much of the soil is too depleted for trees to grow back.

At the same time, prices for wool, leather, meat and milk have dropped, leading Samothraki's farmers to grow increasingly desperate.

Yiannis Vavouras, a second-generation goat farmer, says many island farmers have few alternatives.

"Most of us are ready to give up. If I had another job, I would drop the goats," he says, speaking over the noise of jangling goat bells. "It doesn't make enough to buy you a coffee."

Herds soared due to European Union subsidies, under a system that critics say was poorly monitored and lacked any long-term planning. It now may have to be reversed as a livestock reduction appears inevitable, along with grazing limits.

But that correction doesn't have to be painful, at least according to the island's resident optimist Carlota Maranon, a Spanish lawyer who settled here a decade ago. She heads the sustainability initiative and has eased islanders' deep-rooted mistrust of solutions from the mainland or beyond. The environmental group has worked with overseas researchers and helped create a herd management app, among many other pilot projects, to tackle the issue. Fiercely independent livestock farmers have even joined a new cooperative to try to pool resources and establish a brand for the island.

"It is possible to do things in a more sustainable way," Maranon says. "That might mean fewer goats but that could actually work out better for the farmers."

Having a tight-knit community, she says, will also help.

"Everyone here is connected to the herders in some way, so this issue affects everyone. To live off the land, you have to keep it alive," she said. (Ap news)

(10) Islamists Hope ...

party of jailed media magnate Nabil Karoui are expected to do well.

The parliamentary election is sandwiched between rounds of a bizarre presidential race that will see Karoui face independent law professor Kais Saied in a presidential runoff on Oct. 13.

The Islamist party Ennahdha, the biggest party in the outgoing legislature, is hoping to hold on to its lead by campaigning against corruption and against Karoui. The businessman is accused of tax evasion and money laundering, but denies wrongdoing and says he's being politically targeted. The legislative election has aroused little public interest, which is more focused on the presidential race, but political analysts say Sunday's vote will have lasting impact.

"These elections are of paramount importance, because it is the winners who will decide the future of our country and our major political, economic and social choices," said analyst and former government minister Hakim Ben Hammouda. (Ap news)

(11) Erdogan Threatens ...

spokesman Mustafa Bali tweeted Saturday.

Erdogan's announcement came just two days after U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper and his Turkish counterpart, Hulusi Akar, discussed tensions in the region.

"Secretary Esper and Minister Akar

acknowledged the progress made on the implementation of a security mechanism in northeast Syria and affirmed the mechanism as the way to secure the border in a sustainable manner, ensure the Global Coalition can prevent an ISIS resurgence, and remain fully committed to the close coordination of military operations," Pentagon spokesperson Jonathan Hoffman said in a statement.

Turkey views the People's Protection Units, or YPG, as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has waged an insurgency against Turkey for 35 years. Ankara and Washington consider the PKK a terror group but they diverge on the issue of the YPG, which forms the core of U.S.-backed Syrian forces against ISIS and is loosely linked with the SDF.

In August, Turkey and the U.S. reached a deal to carry out joint patrols and move Syrian Kurdish fighters away from the border. However, both nations disagree on the size of the area to be monitored by joint patrols, and also on who is to oversee it. Turkey wants its soldiers to monitor an area as deep as 19 miles. The U.S. and the Kurdish forces have identified an area only as deep as 9 miles deep.

Three joint U.S.-Turkish ground patrols have run since launching almost a month ago. Kurdish forces have moved away from the frontier and set up new local forces to control border posts, and dismantled fortifications considered a threat by Turkey.

"We gave all warnings to our interlocutors regarding the east of the Euphrates and we have acted with sufficient patience," Erdogan said at the opening of his AK party's annual camp, as reported by Reuters. "We've made our preparations, we've completed our operation plans, given the necessary instructions."

The U.S. European Command tweeted Saturday — apparently in response to the Turkish threats — saying the U.S. and Turkish militaries were already working «to address Turkey's legitimate security concerns.»

«The Department of Defense will be transparent as each phase of the security mechanism is implemented,» it said.

Turkey's state-owned Anadolu Agency reported late Saturday that nine trucks loaded with armored vehicles and a bus carrying military personnel had been sent to a border district near the demilitarized zone. The convoy was sent to reinforce military units based on the Syrian border, according to Anadolu, and it was unclear whether they were tied to potential operations in Syria.

Erdogan said his country wants to send 2 million Syrian refugees now in Turkey to the area it has called a «safe zone.» But the Syrian Kurdish group administering the area said only those from the area can return — a number likely to be much smaller. (Fox news)

(12) Is US National ...

where Russians and Americans can talk directly with each other and settle differences, so the detention of Yumasheva is perceived by Moscow as "a blatant provocation" orchestrated by the political forces in Washington that resist all attempts to mend ties, the ministry suggested. (RT)

(13) Boris Johnson ...

Two cabinet ministers told the paper that the plans include blocking the Union's 2027-2021 budget, which is expected to be signed off early next year, as well as sending a Eurosceptic such as Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage to Brussels as the UK's next EU commissioner.

On Saturday the approach was approved by Steve Baker, former Brexit Minister, who likened it to firing "a nuclear weapon into the heart of the asteroid".

"I unashamedly back Nigel Farage to be our next EU commissioner in the unfortunate event that it transpires," he told Chopper's Brexit Podcast.

"This approach is inspired by the film Armageddon. There is that moment when they are trying to save the world and so what they do is they land on the asteroid and they put a nuclear weapon into the heart of the asteroid. Nigel Farage is that nuclear weapon."

One problem with this plan is that the rest of the European Commission will have been ratified by the European Parliament so MEPs would have a clear vote on whether to approve the UK's nominee. Given Farage's two decades of causing trouble in Brussels MEPs are highly unlikely to wave him through as a commissioner. (RT)