

**(1) US Embassy...**

Wednesday press conference, Aurangzeb, a member of the Election Commission, stated that "two technical experts will come from the company who sold us the biometric devices, and they will help us speed up the transfer of data," adding "the internet issue is getting solved. We are trying to make the votes clean and announce a transparent result."

Aurangzeb also stated that despite delays the commission is aiming to meet the deadline to announce the preliminary results, which is currently scheduled for October 19.

On Tuesday, the US Embassy tweeted support for the decision of the Afghan election commissions to validate only biometrically-approved votes, in the interest of transparency. (Tolo News)

**(2) Data Entry Still ...**

preliminary results should be announced based on the result sheets. The commission should offer justifiable reasons for the problems to the observers," said Wase Rahmani, an election observer.

But the Election Commission on Wednesday once again stated that it will meet the October 19 deadline for determining the preliminary results. (Tolo News)

**(3) Less Than 2 ...**

31.6 percent of polling stations, voters could not find their names neither on biometric devices, nor papers.

Meanwhile, TEFA director Naeem Ayoubzada said that the electoral commissions were under political pressure.

He said that there was also disagreement between IEC's secretariat and its commissioners. (ITV News)

**(4) Turkmenistan...**

also noted - the laying of power lines and fiber optic communications along the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) route.

During the meeting, it was emphasized that Ashgabat's initiatives to form multimodal transit and transport corridors are also aimed at Afghanistan's socio-economic revival, its consistent integration into the system of regional and world economic relations. The implementation of these large-scale projects opens up great prospects for optimizing transport flows throughout the Eurasian space, the Turkmenistan State News Agency reported.

The operations on laying the Turkmen section of the TAPI gas pipeline are planned to be completed till late 2019, the construction of which was launched in December 2015. The construction of the Afghan section was launched in February 2018. Pakistan plans to begin the operations on TAPI this year.

It was also reported about the conducted geological and technical surveys, soil research, terrain; international tenders for the selection of contractors and suppliers; resolving the issues on the allocation of land plots for the construction of pipelines, as well as their operation. The buyers are gas companies from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

The participating countries established the TAPI Pipeline Company Limited consortium, the leader of which was Turkmen gas state concern. The project is being promoted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which acts as a project transaction advisor.

TAPI's resource base will be Galkynsh field, the second biggest gas field in the world (after South Pars field in Iran). The total length of the TAPI gas pipeline with a capacity of 33 billion cubic meters of gas per year will be approximately 1,840 kilometers. Instability in transit Afghanistan remains a great obstacle, but Kabul says it will be able to ensure the safety of the route. (Trend)

**(5) US Soldier in...**

last month. He was later turned over to North Carolina authorities and then been booked into an Alabama jail.

Auburn police and U.S. Army agents are investigating. (AP)

**(6) Canadian Envoy...**

opportunity to support the transparency of the elections.

"Observation is a key-component of fair and transparent elections. It is the responsibility of all the presidential candidates to deploy their own observers so that they can report any concern or complaint to the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission."

The Canadian Ambassador also called on presidential candidates and their supporters to be patient and to refrain from making statements and allegations until the results are released by the Independent Electoral Commission.

Ambassador Metcalfe thanked the IEC for allowing him to have a first-hand view of the vote tabulation in Kabul. "This is a clear demonstration of transparency." He congratulated the Commissioners for the

impressive amount of work that has been accomplished since their appointment last spring, and for the orderly management of the presidential election.

He also hailed the work of the IEC Secretariat, which is primarily involved in the tally operation.

The Canadian Ambassador noted that the Afghan security forces did an impressive job in maintaining security at polling facilities during and after the vote, despite the threats and attempts by the Taliban to disrupt the electoral process.

"Most importantly, I commend Afghans for exercising their vote September 28th and demonstrating their commitment to democracy in Afghanistan."

Ambassador Metcalfe recognized that presidential candidates are eager to get the election results, but requested their patience to allow the IEC and its Secretariat to complete its important work without undue pressure.

He also expressed the hope that unsuccessful candidates will demonstrate their professionalism, accept the verdict of democracy and willingly congratulate the winner chosen by the Afghan people. (Pajhwok)

**(7) Fire Causes...**

an economic expert blamed the private sector for their failure to consider business standards while keeping their materials in storage.

Last year, several huge markets caught in fire in the center of the city where more than a thousand shops were destroyed. (ATN)

**(8) Govt Organs...**

information had always been a concern for them and most of organizations had been not able to provide information to people and media outlets.

He said the government should implement the access to information law so people and media outlets find access to information. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Afghanistan...**

said the expo was a great opportunity for Afghan and Indonesian traders to share their views and experiences and Afghan traders would also see Indonesia's new technology and market for their own products.

Rahman stressed the need for strengthening trade relations between the two countries and said Afghanistan and Indonesia would sign an agreement on strengthening relations in commercial, industrial and mining areas in near future.

He also promised ease in conditions for visa issuance to Afghan traders.

Rahman said his country would also offer educational scholarships to many Afghan students this year.

Niamatullah Niamat, head of Kandahar chamber of industry and mines, talking on behalf of the province's industrialists and traders, said that both the countries shared economic opportunities which should be exploited.

For example, he mentioned, Kandahar minerals and said Indonesia could help invest in the area and process raw materials.

Afghanistan in general and Kandahar in particular has rich mineral resources of marble, chromites, fluorite, cement and others, he said.

Niamat asked the Indonesian ambassador to encourage his country's traders to invest jointly with their Afghan partners in Afghanistan.

He said Afghan traders would welcome any small or big partnership from Indonesian traders. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Corruption: Ex-Paktia...**

However, Qani rejected all allegations against him and said he bought all office materials in the presence of an appointed delegation with him at the time. (Pajhwok)

**(11) Kurds Mobilize in...**

abruptly announced that American troops would step aside ahead of the Turkish push — a shift in U.S. policy that essentially abandoned the Syrian Kurds, longtime U.S. allies in the fight against the Islamic State group in Syria.

But Trump also threatened to "totally destroy and obliterate" Turkey's economy if the Turkish push into Syria went too far.

Turkey has been massing troops for days along its border with Syria and vowed it would go ahead with the military operation and not bow to the U.S. threat over its plans against the Kurds.

A senior Turkish official said Wednesday that Turkey's troops would "shortly" cross into Syria, together with allied Syrian rebel forces to battle the Kurdish fighters and also the Islamic State group.

Trump later cast his decision to pull back U.S. troops from parts of northeast Syria as fulfilling a campaign promise to withdraw

from the "endless war" in the Middle East. Republican critics and others said he was sacrificing a U.S. ally, the Syrian Kurdish forces, and undermining American credibility.

Fahretin Altun, the Turkish presidency's communications director, called on the international community in a Washington Post op-ed published Wednesday "to rally" behind Ankara, which he said would also take over the fight against the Islamic State group.

Turkey aimed to "neutralize" Syrian Kurdish militants in northeast Syria and to "liberate the local population from the yoke of the armed thugs," Altun wrote.

Turkey's defense Hulusi Akar told state-run Anadolu Agency that Turkish preparations for the offensive were continuing.

In its call for mobilization, the local civilian Kurdish authority known as the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, also urged the international community to live up to its responsibilities as "a humanitarian catastrophe might befall our people" in the region.

"We call upon our people, of all ethnic groups, to move toward areas close to the border with Turkey to carry out acts of resistance during this sensitive historical time," it said. The statement said the mobilization would last for three days.

The Kurds also said that they want the U.S.-led coalition to set up a no-fly zone in northeast Syria to protect the civilian population from Turkish airstrikes.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused Washington of playing "very dangerous games" with the Syrian Kurds saying that the U.S. first propped up the Syrian Kurdish "quasi state" in northeastern Syria and is now withdrawing its support.

"Such reckless attitude to this highly sensitive subject can set fire to the entire region, and we have to avoid it at any cost," he said during a visit to Kazakhstan. Russian news said Moscow has communicated that position Washington.

Earlier on Wednesday, IS militants targeted a post of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, which was once the de facto IS capital at the height of the militants' power in the region.

The Kurdish-led SDF, which is holding thousands of IS fighters in several detention facilities in northeastern Syria, has warned that a Turkish incursion might lead to the resurgence of the extremists. The U.S. allied Kurdish-led force captured the last IS area controlled by the militants in eastern Syria in March.

In Wednesday's attack, IS launched three suicide bombings against Kurdish positions in Raqqa. There was no immediate word on casualties. Raqqa is being Silently Slaughtered, an activist collective that covers news in the northern city, reported an exchange of fire and a blast.

The Observatory said the Raqqa attack involved two IS fighters who engaged in a shootout before blowing themselves up.

Also Wednesday, Iranian state television reported a surprise military drill with special operations forces near the country's border with Turkey, in Iran's Western Azerbaijan province. The TV didn't mention the expected Turkish offensive into Syria or elaborate on the reasons for the drill.

The head of the Arab League, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, said he is alarmed at Turkey's planned military offensive, adding in a statement that such an invasion would be a "blatant violation of Syria's sovereignty and threatens Syria's integrity."

About Gheit said the planned incursion also threatens to inflame further conflicts in eastern and northern Syria, and "could allow for the revival" of the Islamic State group.

Mroue reported from Beirut. Associated Press writers Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey; Mehmet Guzel in Akcakale, Turkey; Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, and Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow contributed to this report. (AP News)

**(12) Trump Defends Syria...**

Wednesday, telling "Fox & Friends" that if Trump "follows through with this, it would be the biggest mistake of his presidency."

"I hope he's right. I don't think so," Graham said, comparing Trump's views to the "pre-9/11 mentality that paved the way for 9/11."

Trump defended his unpopular decision, arguing on Twitter that "GOING INTO THE MIDDLE EAST IS THE WORST DECISION EVER MADE IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY!" He said the U.S. went to war under a "false & now disproven premise, WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. There were NONE!"

Trump said he is "slowly & carefully" bringing home "our great soldiers & military," in line with his campaign promise

to do so.

He added: "Our focus is on the BIG PICTURE! THE USA IS GREATER THAN EVER BEFORE!"

But the U.S. military has kept a decades-long focus on the Middle East as part of a strategy of stopping or minimizing security threats before they spread to American and allied shores.

Trump has long criticized President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003, but the subsequent rise of extremist groups like the Islamic State has convinced many national security officials, and lawmakers such as Graham, that a precipitous U.S. troop withdrawal from the region would leave the U.S. and its allies even more vulnerable to extremism.

Trump also claimed the U.S. has spent \$8 trillion "fighting and policing" in the Middle East, up from the \$7 trillion figure he has cited numerous times.

Trump is using an inflated estimate on the cost of wars and referring in part to predicted costs going decades into the future, not money actually spent. Some of the spending also reflects his policy decisions he made since taking office nearly three years ago.

Graham said Congress "will push back" against Turkey. He had said earlier this week that he was working on a bipartisan bill to sanction Turkey if they invade Syria, but he did not mention the proposal during Wednesday's interview.

"We're not giving Turkey a green light in Congress and we're not going to abandon the Kurds," he said. "If the President does so, we won't."

Trump announced Tuesday that he and Erdogan will meet at the White House on Nov. 13. (AP News)

**(13) Two Killed in...**

still image of a man in combat gear with a gun.

"Our forces have detained one person," local police said on Twitter. "Please nonetheless remain vigilant." Earlier, police tweeted: "According to initial findings, two people were killed in Halle. There were several shots."

Gunshots were also heard in Landsberg, a Halle suburb, Focus Online reported.

"This is terrible news from Halle and I hope very much that the police catch the perpetrator, or perpetrators, as quickly as possible," government spokesman Steffen Seibert said, interrupting a regular government news conference.

National rail operator Deutsche Bahn said the main train station in Halle had been closed.

Police did not immediately confirm the media reports associating the gunfire and grenade attack with Jewish targets.

Anti-Semitism is an especially sensitive issue in Germany, which during World War Two was responsible for the genocide of 6 million Jews in the Nazi Holocaust.

Despite comprehensive de-Nazification in the post-war era, fears of resurgent anti-Semitic hatred have never completely gone away, whether from fringe, far-right neo-Nazis or more recently from Muslim immigrants.

**(14) Anti-Brexit ...**

be "dead in a ditch" than ask for any further delay. However, he has also said he would not break the law, without explaining that apparent contradiction.

This week, anti-Brexit campaigners asked Scotland's Court of Session to issue an order stating Johnson must abide by the Benn Act and to send a letter to the European Union on his behalf if he refused to do so himself, using a power known as "nobile officium".

The court said normally it would have rejected the challenge, and indicated it was reluctant to see judges brought into the ferocious Brexit debate.

"The court may only interfere in that debate if there is demonstrable unlawfulness which it requires to address and to correct," the judge said. "At present there has been no such unlawfulness."

But they said they had decided to delay consideration of the case until Oct. 21, after the date Johnson will have had to ask for an extension if no divorce deal had been agreed.

"It is clear that there will be changes in circumstances over the next 10 days," the court's three judges said in their ruling.

"The court will for these reasons continue consideration of the reclaiming motion and the petition to the 'nobile officium' until Monday, 21 October, by which time the position ought to be significantly clearer."

Government lawyers had told the court that Johnson accepted that he must carry out the requirements of the Benn Act, even though he has publicly rejected asking for any further delay.

"We have extracted from him a promise that he will comply with the law," said Jo

Maughan, a tax lawyer who was one of those behind the Scottish case.

"If he breaks that promise, he will face the music - including possible contempt proceedings. And the courts are likely to make good any failure on his part, including signing the Benn Act letter."

Johnson's office said it had no comment on the case. (Reuters)

**(15) Iran Claims It ...**

levels of 90 percent.

Experts estimate it could take about a year before Iran would have enough material to build a nuclear weapon, based on Tehran's indication to use more advanced centrifuges. AEO officials have claimed Iran is "not after the bomb."

Iran inaugurated 20 IR-6 centrifuges in September 2018. Tehran previously said it would not implement additional IR-6 centrifuges until late 2023.

President Trump announced last year that the United States was exiting the nuclear accord, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which Trump said was "the worst deal ever."

Last month, Iran put Europe and the U.S. on notice over its nuclear ambitions, threatening to push uranium levels beyond what it has previously achieved -- possibly even to weapons-grade levels.

"Under current circumstances, the Islamic Republic of Iran is capable of increasing its enriched uranium stockpile, as well as its enrichment levels, and that is not just limited to 20 percent. We are capable inside the country to increase the enrichment much more beyond that," the AEO's Behrouz Kamalvandi told reporters at the time.

He also warned that Iran's stockpile is "quickly increasing," and that the country can enrich uranium levels "much more beyond" current levels.

At the time, Kamalvandi said Iran had started using 20 IR-6 centrifuges and 20 IR-4 centrifuges, and intended to get even more up and running within two months -- a statement the country appeared to be making good on with its announcement Monday.

Iran was limited to using 5,060 IR-1 centrifuges under the nuclear deal.

Earlier this month, multiple outlets reported that French President Emmanuel Macron had offered Iran a \$15 billion line of credit to offset the country's financial woes due to crippling economic sanctions imposed by the United States, under the condition that Iran comes back in compliance with the 2015 deal.

Nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and Iran are currently at a standstill.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani last month accused the United States of "merciless economic terrorism" and ruled out a meeting with President Trump unless the economic sanctions against Tehran are lifted.

"Our response to any negotiations under sanctions is negative," Rouhani said during a speech at the United Nations General Assembly in New York City. "We will never negotiate with an enemy that seeks to make Iran surrender with the weapon of poverty." (Fox News)

**(16) Iran Won't Build...**

culture."

"Imitating others will kill innovation and the real vigor that comes with science," he said.

The Leader advised the Iranian officials to protect the young elite generation from becoming subjected to the phenomenon of brain drain that is being encouraged by certain groups.

He said the Iranian prodigies are the valuable assets of their own country and must be protected against attempts to lure them out of the country using financial incentives and other false promises.

The Leader hailed the Iranian scientists' achievements in defense, medical sciences, engineering, nanotechnology and peaceful nuclear energy despite the increasing foreign pressure.

"We live in a different situation than others," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "We need to think Iranian, act Iranian and live Iranian and this trend can be accelerated by adopting the Islamic-Iranian Blueprint for Progress."

He said Iranians need to attain such high scientific standards that "in 50 years' time, all elites wishing to acquire the latest scientific findings should learn the language of Farsi. This is something that can be achieved through reliance on Iranian genius, intellect and persistence." (Press TV)