

(1) US Envoy in ...

IEC, more than 2.7 million votes were recorded in September 28 presidential election in Afghanistan.

On Monday, IEC said that 1.7 million biometrically verified votes were recorded as it processed data from 85 percent of polling stations.

Preliminary results from the vote are scheduled to be announced on coming Saturday. (ITV News)

(2) Institute Founded ...

including the director approving the bids should have any kinds of relations that could lead to conflict of interest.

This comes as the National Procurement Commission led by President Ghani approves contracts worth more than 100 million Afghans.

The 112th decree of the procurement procedure states that all employees of the procurement department including the delegations tasked with review, bid opening, grants managers and members of the national procurement commission must disclose all clear activities that lead to conflict of interest in Form#7, before starting or approving all kinds of procurement activities.

However, the National Procurement Department and the Office of the President have not commented in this regard so far. (Khaama Press)

(3) MPs Attendance ...

on the FEFA findings, during the past six months the parliament managed to convene only three sessions in which they passed any legislation, which was three bills. Meanwhile, 100 other proposed bills remain in limbo.

This report comes amid scrutiny of MPs for other criticized behavior, specifically their clash with police over illegal weapons, illegal use of special license plates and illegal quantities of hired security personnel.

(4) Civilians Killed ...

"Our house was damaged, and my brother-in-law, his wife and their kids were wounded," said a resident of Warduj, who also said his daughter had injuries on her left leg.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has not commented on the airstrike, nor has the Taliban. (TOLO News)

(5) First Afghanistan ...

group of women.

"It's been difficult," says Fezah Rezaee, 26, a tall woman with light brown hair tucked under a red headscarf. "Not because of the work, but because of people's attitudes towards women working outside, hiking across the province, or having male colleagues. But we kept pushing back and pointing to the importance of our work."

Women first began landmine clearance - now a seasonal job for the spring and summer months - in Afghanistan in June last year.

Earlier this spring, after the snow had melted in the Hindu Kush mountains, 18 women dressed in heavy protective gear walked into Bamyan province's last mine fields, risking their lives to clear the remaining explosives.

Home to the famous Buddha statues destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, mine clearance started in Bamyan in 2003. Since then more than 60,000 explosives - including unexploded ordnance such as mortar bombs - have been laboriously located, unearthed and removed. "Most days, we hike several hours in the hot sun, carrying all of our equipment, just to get to the minefields. We're proud of what we've accomplished," says Rezaee, a mother of two. "I'm working for a better future - for my country and my children."

Like the rest of the team, Rezaee was born and raised in Bamyan and received a months training before stepping into the minefields.

"When we first advertised the positions, we had over 200 people apply," explains team leader Habib Noor, 41, of the Danish Demining Group, the organisation currently running the project. He says he wished they had started working with female deminers earlier. Forty years of war have left Afghanistan devastated and the figures are grim: home to 37 million people, it is one of the most mined countries in the world.

"We are struggling to handle significant increases in the number of minefields in Afghanistan," explains United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Country Director Patrick Fruchet.

He says all of the country's 34 provinces had been mined, though no maps of their locations exist and there are no records of how many new mines continue to be put in the ground. The work has been further complicated, he says, as "authorities control only around half the country".

The US said earlier this year that they

had stopped counting how much territory the Taliban actually controlled.

October marks 18 years since the start of the US invasion in 2001. A US-Taliban peace agreement, which it was hoped would be signed this year, fell through after a bombing in Kabul that killed a US soldier caused President Donald Trump to cancel negotiations in September.

Bamyan is home to Afghanistan's ethnic Hazara community and is a three-hour drive northwest of the capital Kabul along a road with occasional Taliban checkpoints.

Rezaee's day - and that of her 17 female colleagues - starts before sunrise, when the women hike up into the mountains, carrying as much water and equipment as possible.

"How much ground I get to clear in a day depends on the terrain and how steep or difficult is it," she explains, "but it's usually anywhere between 30-40 square meters.

For this, Rezaee earns a monthly salary of 31,000 Afghani (€325), supporting both her two children and her husband.

"When I got married, I had already finished university, but my husband, who was a few years older, hadn't even finished school," Rezaee says. "I first opposed the marriage, telling my mother and father that I didn't want to be with an uneducated man." (The Telegraph)

(6) In Sar-I-Pul ...

But in the first six months of the current year, the number of such incidents increased, the director told Pajhwok Afghan News.

The department registered six cases of murder, 21 of beatings, five of forced marriage, four of death threats, eight of harassment, four of sexual assault and one each of suicide and insult.

Habibi added most of women in the province were faced with forced marriage, underage marriage, illiteracy and drug addiction among men.

She said men went abroad for work, especially to Iran, because of economic problems, but they returned addicted to drugs. This worsened the situation of women and led to domestic violence, the official explained.

Gulab Saeedi, a women rights activist in the province, believed violence against females largely resulted from poverty, illiteracy, misuse of social media and lack of awareness. (Pajhwok)

(7) Helmand Shopkeepers ...

that taxes of insecure areas should be collected from secure areas.

Zwak also acknowledged that insecurity had a negative impact on businesses in the province.

Helmand is one of insecure areas of the country where Taliban are in control of half of the districts. (Pajhwok)

(8) Mohib Wants ...

proposals in accordance with the law.

Two days back, police and lawmakers clashed over the checking of vehicles. Soon afterwards, around 61 MPs held an emergency session and summoned the interior minister. (Pajhwok)

(9) US, Taliban ...

discussed. The Taliban envoys promised talks with Kabul after reaching a deal with the US on a troop pullout.

Prime Minister Imran Khan is believed to have pleaded with Trump and his point man on Afghanistan Khalilzad that a return to peace parleys remained a viable option.

The official said Khalilzad and Taliban negotiators agreed that a prisoner swap could be an effective confidence-building measure. (Pajhwok)

(10) Coordination ...

capacity and combat skills and called their latest operations against militants as successful.

The US general also said improved coordination among Afghan security and defense forces was behind their success.

"Afghan security and defense forces defeated the enemy on the battlefield and killed their key terrorist figures in recent past and captured many areas from them," Miller was quoted as saying.

President Ghani thanked NATO's continued support with Afghan security and defense forces and said, "Coordination among Afghan security and defense forces has significantly increased and has led to their success against terrorists."

He said Afghan forces were fighting on front lines against terrorism and international community's support was important for them. (Pajhwok)

(11) 50pc of Big ...

taxpayers.

The director said they arranged two training workshops every week to help taxpayers understand the benefits of using the online system.

So far, they had organised 48 workshops and around 1,000 people attended the

events, she informed.

The Revenue Department information shows 189 billion afghans were collected in revenue last year. So far 146 billion afghans have been collected this year. (Pajhwok)

(12) 9 Civilians ...

details about the latest civilian casualties. Habibullah, a resident of Warduj district, said Afghan jets bombed the area on Sunday at around 10am, damaging a number of homes, including his.

Mohammad Idrees, who was injured in the incident, told Pajhwok Afghan News from his hospital bed that he was working in fields when the airstrikes occurred. He suffered wounds on the head. "I heard a loud sound and then fell unconscious and when I came to senses, I was in hospital surrounded by doctors."

District Chief Mohammad Umar Paiman, through a telephonic conversation, said that he did not have enough information regarding the airstrikes and did not want to comment on this.

Pajhwok tried to reach out to provincial and security officials, but failed.

The Taliban, however, claimed that civilians suffered life and material losses during the airstrikes in Warduj district. (Pajhwok)

(13) Syrian Army Moves ...

with its invasion of northern Syria, warning its NATO allies in Europe and the United States not to stand in its way.

Turkish troops and Syrian proxy forces have steadily pushed their way south of the border, clashing with the Kurdish fighters over a stretch of 200 kilometers (125 miles). The offensive has displaced at least 130,000 people.

Turkey's president signaled that it was ready to launch an assault on the city of Manbij, where Kurdish-led groups invited Syrian government forces to re-enter and defend the town.

"We are about to implement our decision on Manbij," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters on Monday.

He added that Turkey's aim would be to return the city to Arab populations whom he said were its rightful owners. Turkish forces were already positioned at the city's edge, according to CNN-Turk.

Erdogan has already said Turkey will not negotiate with the Syrian Kurdish fighters, which it considers "terrorists" for links to a long-running Kurdish insurgency within its own borders.

Syrian state media reported late Sunday that government troops were marching toward Manbij - as well as the border town of Kobani that in 2015 witnessed the Islamic State group's first defeat in a battle by U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters.

In another direction, Syrian troops moved east from Aleppo province to Raqqa where state media said they had reached Ein Issa. Heavy fighting the previous day there reached a Kurdish-run displaced-person camp that is home to some 12,000 people, including around 1,000 wives and widows of IS fighters and their children. Hundreds are believed to have escaped amid the chaos.

The Syrian army also moved into the town of Tal Tamr, which is about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Turkish border, and Tabqa, known for its dam on the Euphrates River and its nearby air base that carries the same name.

SANA said government forces planned to "confront the Turkish aggression," without giving further details. Photos posted by SANA showed several vehicles and a small number of troops in Tal Tamr.

Tal Tamr is a predominantly Assyrian Christian town that was once held by IS before it was retaken by Kurdish-led forces. Many Syrian Christians, who make up about 10 percent of Syria's pre-war population of 23 million, left for Europe over the past 20 years, with the flight gathering speed since the country's conflict began in March 2011.

Mroue reported from Beirut. Associated Press writers Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria and Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, contributed to this report. (AP News)

(14) Japan Looks for ...

casualty count has been growing daily. Hagibis dropped record amounts of rain for a period in some spots, according to meteorological officials, causing more than 20 rivers to overflow. In Kanagawa prefecture, southwest of Tokyo, 100 centimeters (39 inches) of rain was recorded over 48 hours.

Some of the muddy waters in streets, fields and residential areas have subsided. But many places remained flooded Monday, with homes and surrounding roads covered in mud and littered with broken wooden pieces and debris.

Some places normally dry still looked like giant rivers. Some who lined up for morning soup at evacuation shelters, which are housing 30,000 people, expressed concern about the homes they left behind. Sur-

vivors and rescuers will also face colder weather, with northern Japan turning chilly this week.

Soldiers and firefighters from throughout Japan were deployed to assist with rescue efforts. Helicopters could be seen plucking some of the stranded from higher floors and rooftops of submerged homes.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the government would set up a special disaster team, including officials from various ministries, to deal with the fallout from the typhoon, including helping those in evacuation centers and boosting efforts to restore water and electricity to homes.

"Our response must be rapid and appropriate," Abe said, stressing that many people remained missing and damage was extensive.

Damage was especially serious in Nagano prefecture, where an embankment of the Chikuma River broke.

In Hoyasu, a few vehicles in used car lots were flipped over by the waters that had gushed in, covering everything with mud. Apples swept from the flooded orchards lay scattered in the mud.

Areas in Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures in northern Japan were also badly flooded.

In such areas, rescue crew paddled in boats to reach half-submerged homes, calling out to anyone left stranded.

Tokyo Electric Power Co. said 35,100 homes were still without electricity early Monday evening in Tokyo and nearby prefectures that the utility serves. That was down from nearly 57,000 earlier in the day.

East Japan Railway Co. said Hokuriku bullet trains were running Monday but were reduced in frequency and limited to the Nagano city and Tokyo routes.

Mimori Domoto, who works at Nagano craft beer-maker Yoho Brewing Co., said all 40 employees at her company were confirmed safe, though deliveries were halted.

"My heart aches when I think of the damage that happened in Nagano. Who would have thought it would get this bad?" she said.

Tama River in Tokyo overflowed, but the damage was not as great in the capital as in other areas. Areas surrounding Tokyo, such as Tochigi, also suffered damage.

Much of life in Tokyo returned to normal on Monday. People were out and about in the city, trains were running, and store shelves left bare when people were stockpiling were replenished. (AP News)

(15) Queen Elizabeth ...

Union due on Oct. 31 and the possibility of an early election makes it uncertain any of these measures will ever become law.

9:15 a.m. Britain is getting out an ornate royal carriage and a diamond-studded crown for the State Opening of Parliament, a mix of ceremony and politics overshadowed by the looming Brexit deadline.

Queen Elizabeth II is due at Parliament to deliver a speech written by the government outlining its legislative plans.

This year's speech is surrounded by the uncertainty of Britain's delayed exit from the European Union. It is set to include a bill to ratify a withdrawal agreement with the EU - but no such agreement has yet been made.

It also includes sweeping domestic promises on law and order, health care and environmental protection that the government may never get to implement. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative administration lacks a majority in Parliament, and an election looks likely within the next few months, whether or not Britain leaves the EU as scheduled on Oct. 31. 9:15 a.m.

German authorities say the country's exports to Britain dropped 4.6% in the first seven months of 2019 compared with a year earlier, continuing a downward trend since British voters chose to leave the European Union in 2016.

The Federal Statistical Office said Monday that Germany exported goods worth 47.1 billion euros (\$52 billion) to the U.K. between January and July. British exports to Germany were worth 21.3 billion euros - a 3.7% decline in year-on-year terms.

In the January-July period, Britain was Germany's No. 7 trading partner overall. In 2015, the year before the Brexit referendum, it was No. 5. The statistics office said that German exports to Britain climbed steadily from 2010 to 2015 but then dropped. It said exports of cars and auto parts have declined strongly. 8:45 a.m.

The British government says it will deliver its annual budget on Nov. 6, a week after the country is due to leave the European Union.

Treasury chief Sajid Javid said "the first budget after leaving the EU" will set out "our plan to shape the economy for the

future."

It's unclear, however, whether the U.K. will leave the EU as scheduled on Oct. 31. Talks on a last-minute divorce deal are continuing, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson says the country will quit the bloc at the end of this month, with or without a withdrawal agreement.

But lawmakers in Parliament say the government must ask the EU to delay if a no-deal Brexit is the only other option. Opposition Labour Party finance spokesman John McDonnell called the budget announcement "an electioneering stunt." 7:20 a.m.

Ireland says that a Brexit deal may be possible in the coming days, after technical teams from Britain and the European Union worked through the weekend.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said in Luxembourg that "a deal is possible, and it is possible this month. May be possible this week. But we are not there yet."

Coveney insisted it was essential to give the negotiators time to iron out the remaining difficulties which largely center on the border between Ireland and the U.K.'s Northern Ireland.

He added that "there is still a lot of work to do."

EU leaders will meet on Thursday and Friday to see whether a deal is possible ahead of the Brexit deadline of Oct. 31. (AP News)

(16) EU Negotiators ...

we say now, the better."

Despite his reticence, Coveney said "a deal is possible, and it is possible this month. May be possible this week. But we are not there yet."

Coveney insisted it was essential to give the negotiators time to iron out the remaining difficulties.

"There is still a lot of work to do," he said. Queen Elizabeth is set to deliver a speech outlining the program for government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

EU leaders, including Johnson, are meeting on Thursday and Friday to see whether a deal is possible ahead of the Brexit deadline of Oct. 31. (Fox Business)

(17) Catalan Separatist ...

Puigdemont was the head of the Spanish region at the time of the independence bid but was not part of this trial because he fled to Belgium, where he now lives in self-imposed exile.

Al Jazeera's Sonia Gallego reporting from the Spanish city of Barcelona said: "The significance of this verdict is that it doesn't carry the full weight of that more serious charge of rebellion."

"That was apparently what one of the prosecutors was actually calling for," she added.

However, Gallego said that it was still a "hefty" sentence.

All nine sentenced were banned from running or participating in public office - as well as the other three defendants who will face a nominal ban for 10 months, she reported.

"This is likely to cause a lot of anger among the pro-secessionists here [in Catalonia]."

Hundreds of students and civil servants have reportedly begun protests in different parts of Barcelona following the sentencing. (Aljazeera)

(18) China's Xi ...

potential flashpoint on Wednesday, when the Hong Kong government will reconvene its Legislative Council for a fall session. Embattled chief executive Carrie Lam is also scheduled to give a speech, and is expected to formally withdraw the extradition bill that sparked the protests.

With violence escalating, foreign governments including the US and UK are putting more pressure on Beijing to act humanely and hold up its end of the Sino-British Joint Declaration - an agreement meant to protect freedoms in Hong Kong when the former colony was returned to China.

American politicians have also introduced the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which would mandate an annual review to determine whether Hong Kong remained sufficiently autonomous to justify unique treatment by the US.

It would also sanction individuals over human rights violations and bar them from entering the country.

The bill has drawn bipartisan support and is scheduled to be considered in the House this week, after sailing unanimously through earlier committees.

Protesters first took to the streets over concerns that suspects extradited to China would not receive a fair trial, as Communist Party control contributes to a 99.9 per cent conviction rate. (Telegraph)