Afghan troops backed by U.S. forces gained control of most of the embattled city of Ghazni on Tuesday, officials said, while a Taliban attack in another province raised new questions about Afghanistan’s defenses against the insurgency.

GHAZNI - After five days of fighting, Ghazni, a strategically vital center two hours from Kabul on the main highway between the capital and southern Afghanistan was a city of burned-out buildings and vehicles with bodies lying in the streets. Local officials had been warning for months that the Taliban’s growing control over surrounding districts had left Ghazni vulnerable to attack and President Ashraf Ghani faced bitter accusations over the failure to protect the city.

The government has faced accusations of incompetence, neglect and complacency, as well as anger at its repeated assurances that the Taliban attack had failed, even while hundreds of fighters were roaming at will through the city. “All we heard from officials were lies and deceit and the people know this,” said Etemadi, who added that fighting was still going on. The assault, which shocked the country, raises fresh questions over parliamentary elections scheduled for Oct. 20 as well as over hopes for peace talks with the Taliban, which had grown following a three-day truce in June.

Afghan Forces Regaining Control of Much of Besieged City

KABUL - The Independent Election Commission (IEC) released the final list of Wolesi Jirga candidates from 33 provinces on Tuesday, a day after supporters of some disqualified hopefuls shut the panel’s gates in Kabul and northeastern Badakhshan province.

The final list of contenders from 33 provinces was posted on the IEC website. Candidates from embattled Ghazni province, where fierce clashes have been underway for the last four days, are not included in the list.

IEC Unveils Final List of Candidates from 33 Provinces

KABUL - Ministry of Mine and Petroleum says seeking to attract investment in the mining sector in a bid to increase government revenues.

“Are trying to get the approval of economic high council on all projects of the mining sector in order to ease the problems and boost the contracts’ process in the sector,” said the ministry’s spokesman Abdul Qadir Mutfi.

MoM Seeks Attracting Investment in Mining Sector

KABUL - As a result of strict monitoring of contracts for transporting pilgrims to Saudi Arabia, $1.6 million has been saved, the National Procurement Commission (NPC) said on Tuesday.

$1.6m Saved in Hajj-Related Contracts, Claims NPC

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