

(1) Afghan Forces...

official said the attack on a strategic city so close to the capital was intended as a demonstration that the insurgents held the upper hand on the battlefield, which would strengthen their position in talks. "We wanted to convey a message to the Americans, their allies and the puppet government in Afghanistan that if we want, we can target them anytime and anywhere," he said.

Hundreds of people have been killed and wounded in the fighting, some of the heaviest seen in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized the northern city of Kunduz in 2015.

Government officials said nearly 100 members of the security forces have been killed while the U.S. military said it had carried out more than 30 air strikes that had killed more than 220 Taliban since Friday.

There have been no reliable estimates of civilian casualties but the city's hospitals have been overwhelmed.

"Bodies of Taliban fighters and police can be seen in the streets. I saw two bodies that were eaten by dogs," said Abdul Hakim Sulaimankhel, 37, who owns an auto parts shop in Ghazni.

He said shops and a big carpet market had been burned out and a neighbor's granddaughter had died of illness because her family could not take her to hospital. "There is no bread and shops have all been destroyed. It will take months for it all to be rebuilt," he said. (Reuters)

(2) IEC Unveils...

The candidates' nomination process for the Oct 20 parliamentary polls began two back in Kabul in the presence of dozens of observers, representatives of political parties and media.

Maulvi Tarakhel, Fawzia Kofi, Zardad Faryadi, Qais Hassan, Sher Ali Ahmadzai, Akbar Stanikzai, Shayesta Baz Naseri and Amanullah Hotak are among the 35 candidates removed from the final list. (Pajhwok)

(3) MoM Seeks Attracting...

the economic high council. The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), meanwhile, said that increasing contacts in the mining sector is effective and that the government should support the private investments in the sector. "We support this so that investments in mining sector get raised, but the government should have issues in this regard that need to be solved," said Khan Jan Alokozay, Deputy Head of ACCI. Since the formation of the National Unity Government contracts in the mining sector had been halted. But reports suggest that the contracting process has resumed now. (ATN)

(4) Ghazni: US...

for them to reconcile and join the peace process."

He said Task Force-Southeast, US Special Forces and 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade advisors were providing advice on things such as clearance operations and combined-arms integration.

From a US Forces-Afghanistan perspective, US airpower has killed more than 220 Taliban since August 10.

In addition to the initial strike on Friday, U.S. forces conducted five strikes Saturday, 16 strikes Sunday, 10 Monday and none thus far today.

Also, AH-64s from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Combat Aviation Brigade pro-

vided close-air support on Friday, Sunday and Monday." (Pajhwok)

(5) 150 Civilians...

positions continued, but not as heavy as they were on Monday night.

The city of Ghazni has been the scene of intense fighting and a total communication blackout since the Taliban assault.

According to the OCHA report, large numbers of civilians have fled to nearby Wardak province. Around 70 people have reportedly arrived in the city of Gardez, the capital of Paktya, as at Monda (Agencies)

(6) Taliban Overrun...

The particular base is located in a remote part of the province, and was receiving supplies via air for months.

Meanwhile, the Taliban spokesman Qari Yosuf Ahmadi has tweeted that the military base in Chilgazi area of the district was taken over by the militant group. (AA)

(7) Critical Infrastructure...

positions of the armed group. After attacks on key government offices, critical infrastructure has been damaged. Communications networks and the electricity supply are currently down in Ghazni, resulting in water shortages. OCHA said some patients managed to reach first aid trauma posts outside of the city and approximately 20 others in critical conditions were transported to Kabul by a medical NGO for further treatment.

Families have taken shelter in houses and are unable to leave, even to get water from wells and fountains. Food is running low. There are reports of families moving from homes on the outskirts of the city to surrounding villages, sheltering with relatives.

The main hospital is overwhelmed by the high number of casualties. Off-duty health staff in accessible areas has been transferred to the hospital in ambulances to support on-duty colleagues.

Eight surgeons are currently working in the hospital's operation theatre. Due to ongoing fighting, residents are unable to safely bring injured persons to the hospital, indicating the number of people requiring emergency medical treatment may rise.

Medication and medical supplies at the hospital are reportedly running low although some supplies, including body bags, have been received.

The hospital is powered by one generator but fuel is difficult to obtain since pump stations are closed. An international organization, however, has delivered a sufficient amount of fuel to enable the hospital to run for the next three to four days.

There is no UN presence in Ghazni City, but 25 to 30 NGOs implement humanitarian programmes in the province and are on standby to respond once the security situation allows.

Existing stockpiles are sufficient to facilitate an immediate response in Ghazni City and include emergency household items for more than 6,000 people, 400 family tents, cash assistance for 9,800 people and nearly 140 MT of food to support 4,200 people for one month. (Pajhwok)

(8) Drought-Hit Samangan...

he said. Some reports previously said around a hundred Afghan soldiers were missing in Ajiristan. But Tariq Shah Behrami, the defense minister, said only 50 soldiers were missing, probably

sheltering in neighboring districts. (Pajhwok)

(9) Afghan Forces...

attempting to increase attacks in key provinces and cities of the country, including capital Kabul during the recent months.

A suicide bomber detonated his explosives near the election commission office on Monday, leaving a policeman dead and another wounded. (KP)

(10) Timber worth...

suspicious activities, corruption, illegal trafficking of timber or any other anti-government movements.

Talibjan, a resident of Badyali area, said that insurgents, government officials and powerful figures had been smuggling timber over the past three years.

Lalpacha, another resident, said timber smuggling was an income source for insurgents to meet their operation costs. (Pajhwok)

(11) 33 Security...

reports previously said around a hundred Afghan soldiers were missing in Ajiristan. But Tariq Shah Behrami, the defense minister, said only 50 soldiers were missing, probably sheltering in neighboring districts. (Pajhwok)

Former Brazil Finance Minister Charged with Corruption

BRASÍLIA - Former Brazil finance minister Guido Mantega was indicted Monday on money laundering and other charges as part of the corruption scandal that has rocked the country's business and political elites.

Mantega, 69, is accused of taking money from construction giant Odebrecht in exchange for helping to advance legislation that favored the company, Judge Sergio Moro wrote.

It is the first time Mantega has been charged in the so-called "Operation Car Wash", a vast probe of a pay-to-play relationship between Brazilian companies and politicians centered around the state oil company Petrobras.

Mantega was finance minister during the second term of now jailed former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, and continued to hold the post under Lula's successor Dilma Rousseff. (AFP)

Bosnian Serb Leader Denies Scope of Srebrenica Massacre

BANJA LUKA, Bosnia-Herzegovina - The leader of Bosnia's Serbs called on Tuesday for a government report that acknowledged the massacre of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in 1995 to be revoked, triggering possible new tensions in the war-scarred Balkan state.

Milorad Dodik spoke at a parliamentary session of the autonomous Bosnian Serb republic, demanding that the legislature revoke the 2004 report compiled by a previous government which acknowledged the massacre - the worst carnage in Europe since World War II. He said the report is biased and does not mention Serb victims.

Dodik, who advocates that Bosnian Serb territories should split and join Serbia, has always rejected rulings by the U.N. war crimes court that genocide was committed in Srebrenica. He accused "some Western states" and rival Bosnian Muslims of staging the massacre.

"The Srebrenica crime is a staged tragedy with an aim to satanize

the Serbs," Dodik said without elaborating.

He called for the forming of an "unbiased" international investigation into the Srebrenica massacre "in order to stop manipulation with the victims."

"Dodik's initiative is shameful and inhumane toward the victims," said Sehida Abdurahmanovic, a member of the Mothers of Srebrenica rights association. "Genocide was confirmed in Srebrenica. We cannot allow that someone changes the number of victims for something that is definite. We are again returning to the facts that we thought were confirmed."

Bosnian Serbs overran the majority Muslim town on July 11, 1995, rounding up Srebrenica's Muslims and killing more than 8,000 men and boys.

The U.N. war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has sentenced Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic and his military commander Ratko Mladic over the Srebrenica massacre and other atrocities of the 1992-95 war.

Although the international court has labeled the Srebrenica killings as genocide, Serbs have never admitted that their troops committed the ultimate crime and nationalist politicians have viewed Mladic and Karadzic as heroes. (AP)

Portugal Says It will Take Some Migrants from Rescue Ship

PARIS - Portugal has become the first European country to say it could take in some migrants aboard the rescue ship Aquarius Tuesday, as officials in coastal France made impassioned pleas their government to allow it to dock there.

Portugal, which does not have a Mediterranean coastline, said it was willing to take 30 migrants from the rescue ship and from other, smaller boats it said were delivering migrants to Malta Tuesday.

The vessel, currently sailing between Malta and the Italian island of Lampedusa, is carrying 141 migrants that it rescued last week from the Mediterranean Sea.

Italy's new anti-migrant government and Malta both refused to take it, prompting a rebuke from humanitarian group Amnesty International to "stop playing with refugee and migrants' lives."

Amid mounting pressure for European Union members to respond, Spain said it is working on a coordinated response to the Aquarius issue with the European Commission and other unnamed countries, said a Spanish government spokeswoman, who wasn't authorized to be named.

Officials in the French island of Corsica, meanwhile, added pressure to a thus-far silent President Emmanuel Macron to make a decision on the fate of the ship, saying that the Aquarius should be allowed to dock there on humanitarian grounds.

The ship is operated by French aid groups who say the health of those rescued in two operations Friday is stable but that many are weak and malnourished.

"Simply, there's a necessity today to get help to this ship," Jean-Guy Talamoni, president of Corsica's local assembly, told BFM-TV.

"It's time (Europe) wakes up and that everyone takes their share of responsibility. In the meantime, there are emergency situations, and you have to deal with them," he added.

Corsica's executive council head, Gilles Simeoni increased the pressure on Tuesday with a tweet: "Corsica and its ports remain available for emergency humanitarian aid."

Simeoni added that Europe needs a real European policy on the migrant issue in the Mediterranean sea.

In the coastal town of Sete near Montpellier in southern France, the port director also said he was ready to accept the Aquarius.

The comments serve to spur to action the French government and President Emmanuel Macron - who has yet to comment and who ultimately decides if the vessel will be accepted by France.

Arrivals into Europe of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa numbered just over 61,500 through Aug. 12, with 1,524 deaths reported, the UN migration agency said Tuesday. (AP)

Ruble Slump Hits Russians' Wallets, Not Their Support for Putin

MOSCOW - Alexei Nikolayev, one of more than 56 million Russians who re-elected President Vladimir Putin in March, is already counting the likely cost of a weaker ruble: less spending power abroad, higher prices at home, and another round of belt tightening.

But Nikolayev, a 56-year old graphic designer who enjoys foreign travel and imported wine, blames the West, not Putin, for the pain and has no regrets about voting for a politician he sees as the right man to guide Russia through troubled times.

"It's painful and it's unpleasant, but it won't change my politics," Nikolayev said of the ruble shedding 10 percent of its value against the dollar since the end of July, driven down largely by new U.S. sanctions on Russia.

"In fact, as strange as it may sound, it will only strengthen my convictions. They (the West) are trying to break Russia."

Nikolayev's view that Putin is not to blame is held widely among Russians, according to Stepan Goncharov, a sociologist at the Levada Center pollster.

"People don't really understand the dynamics behind it and the president, traditionally, is safe from criticism," Goncharov told Reuters.

The narrative in Russia that the ruble's slide is the result of a Western plot has direct echoes with Turkey, Russia's ally whose lira currency slid to a record low on Monday. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said his country is the target of an economic war and has said Turkey will boycott some U.S. imports in retaliation.

In Russia, the falling ruble causes pain for some. The price of imported goods is likely to rise. Foreign vacations have also become more expensive.

Irina Turina, a spokeswoman for the Russian Travel Industry Union, said travel agents had seen demand for package holidays fall by 10-15 percent last week because of the ruble's volatility.

"People who have not yet paid in full for their holidays are rushing to pay off the rest even if they have no obligation to do so," Turina told Reuters, saying people were worried that the outstanding balance would be recalculated according to a higher, less favorable exchange rate. (Reuters)