

(1) Thousands of Fraud...

representatives of political parties have closed main roads in different parts of capital Kabul to press the government to accept their election-related demands.

The protesters say demands should be met ahead of the October 20 elections.

Demands

Allowing representatives of political parties to monitor the conduct of elections

Changing the current Single None-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system to a transferable vote system.

The launch of a fresh voter registration through biometric system

Hundreds of supporters of political parties have blocked the roads in some areas of Kabul including Sara-i-Shamali, Public Health Square, and Banai Chock. The protestors say they would extend their protest to other parts of the central capital if their demands were ignored.

IEC Commissioner Syed Hafeezullah Hashami rejected involvement of IEC in the alleged rigging efforts and said some parties hitched negative propaganda against the election body which has nothing to do with the IEC.

He said the NGA could refer to the judiciary department to prove their claim is right. (Pajhwok)

(2) Governor Denies...

consulate in Jalalabad," said Haidari.

The embassy of Pakistan in Kabul announced Friday that it has closed its consulate in Jalalabad to protest local officials' intervention in activities of the diplomatic office.

"The Embassy wishes to inform that the Consulate General will remain closed until the security arrangements are complete to the satisfaction of the embassy," the Pakistani embassy said in a press release on Friday. The embassy said the decision has been made in reaction to provincial governor Hayatullah Hayat's intervention in activities of the consulate.

"The Embassy of Pakistan in Kabul deeply regrets undue intervention of Governor Hayatullah Hayat in the functioning of the Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Jalalabad is complete violation of the Vienna Convention of the Consular Relations 1963."

The embassy said it has requested the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to "kindly refrain the governor from interfering in the functioning of the Consulate General and to ensure restoration of security of the consulate office as it existed on August 28, 2018."

Part two of the Article 31 of Vienna Convention on Consular Relations says "the authorities of the receiving State shall not enter that part of the consular premises which is used exclusively for the purpose of the work of the consular post except with the consent of the head of the consular post or of his designee or of the head of the diplomatic mission of the sending State".

(3) Vaccination Drive...

September targeting 16 provinces including the most affected, at risk and accessible provinces. The second phase, from 17 -26 November will cover the remaining 18 provinces. "Immunization has been proven as one of the most cost-effective

and lifesaving interventions against killer childhood diseases. Every girl and boy must be reached no matter who they are and where they live," says Adele Khodr, UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan. "I call upon parents, caregivers, community leaders and all stakeholders to ensure that both girls and boys under the age of ten years can safely reach a mosque or village health facility, so we can together save the life lives of millions of children in Afghanistan." Khodr emphasised

With the support of the GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, the upcoming campaign will cost approximately US\$ 14.6 million (5.6 m for vaccines and USD 9 million for operations) - to cover procurement of 14.8 million doses of vaccine, logistics, training, measles case management and activating social networks in communities to ensure local buy-in.

"I congratulate the government of Afghanistan for this landmark campaign," said Dr Seth Berkeley, CEO of Gavi the Vaccine Alliance. "Low vaccine coverage, mass population displacements and persistent insecurity have posed an immense challenge to measles control. Strengthening Afghanistan's routine immunisation must be a top priority to secure further reductions in mortality from this vaccine-preventable disease."

The Afghanistan Demographic Health Survey of 2015 estimates that only 60% of eligible Afghan children receive their first dose of measles vaccine every year while less than 40% receive the second dose. Low coverage has led to approximately 300 deaths from the disease last year. Routine vaccination for children, combined with mass immunization campaigns remain key public health strategies to reduce global measles deaths. (Pajhwok)

(4) Road Works...

of Baghlan and Parwan provincial council members have called for the same thing - insisting on the road being resurfaced properly. They also questioned the quality of asphalt being used.

"Very soon the road will be damaged again. Certainly; the asphalt that they use and call standard, and quality, go and have a look at the Doshi area - the road is destroyed," said Mohammad Safdar Muhssini head of Baghlan provincial council.

"We want good roads and then the people's problems will be solved," said Abdul Hai Nemati, Baghlan governor.

The reconstruction cost of the 30km-stretch of the Salang highway will total an estimated 250 million Afghani.

Issues around Salang Pass have been a focal point over the past few months and in June MoPW said that technical and geological surveys and the design of a new Salang Tunnel will be finalized towards the end of next year.

According to the MoPH, an Australian company - Smeck Consultants - is conducting technical assessments relating to the tunnel which will most likely be built alongside the existing tunnel.

The existing Salang Tunnel is a 2.67km long tunnel located on the Salang Pass in the Hindu Kush mountains, between Parwan and Baghlan provinces.

It was completed by the Soviet Union in 1964 and has been used to connect northern Afghan cities with Kabul for decades. (Tolo news)

(5) Iran, Afghanistan...

commerce between Farah and South Khorasan, establishing a joint trade chamber between the two provinces and holding joint meetings to follow up issues of mutual interest were among the most important issues.

The MoU also focused on issues related to facilitating tourism, offering IT products, extending the working hours of customs offices and taking advantage of transit and transportation capacities.

The Iranian governor noted that besides economic issues, scientific, cultural, academic and tourism cooperation are also among private sector responsibilities that should be taken into account.

Salangi appreciated South Khorasan hospitality, saying the capacities of the Iranian province will help develop commercial ties between Iran and Afghanistan.

"The MoU will help facilitate trade and cultural exchanges between the two sides," he added. (Agencies)

(6) Nation Supports...

nation and international community was fully aware of the demands of the Peace Convoy. Members of the convoy have staged sit-ins in front of some foreign missions in Kabul to put pressure on them for the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(7) Herat: Prisoner...

hospital, said the injured inmate was brought to hospital in critical condition. He succumbed to his wounds later on. He was stabbed in the neck.

Separately, an individual was shot dead in Herat City by unidentified gunmen at 10:30am, said the governor's spokesman. Abdul Ahad Walizada said personal enmity was behind the shooting. Police had launched a mounted for the killers, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(8) Prayer Leader...

Dr. Shafiq Shaiq, Balkh zonal hospital director, confirmed the imam succumbed to his wounds at the hospital. He said Arif was shot in the head and stomach.

Juma Din, a resident of the area, said the prayer leader always preached peace, unity and brotherhood. He urged the government to bring the killers to justice. (Pajhwok)

(9) Scores of Taliban...

205th Atal Military Corps said. Sadeq added four rebel hideouts and some explosives were also destroyed in the airstrike.

Two commanders were among three insurgents killed late on Friday in an air raid by foreign troop in the Bari area of Qalat, the capital of southern Zabul province, the governor spokesman Gul Islam Seal said.

The Taliban have so far said nothing about the incidents. (Pajhwok)

Kremlin Slams Murder of Ukrainian Rebel Leader

MOSCOW - The murder of Alexander Zakharchenko, leader of Ukraine's independence-seeking Donetsk region, has increased tension in the region, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Saturday.

Zakharchenko's death "does not contribute to the formation of conditions for at least a promising start to the implementation of the Minsk agreements," Peskov told a daily briefing.

He called the murder of the Donetsk leader a provocation, and it

remains unclear who was behind the attack.

"This is a blatant provocation aimed at hindering the implementation of the Minsk agreements," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Saturday.

The Minsk agreements consist of a first protocol that the Ukrainian government and the rebels reached under the mediation of Russia, France and Germany in September 2014 in the Belarussian capital of Minsk, and a more detailed renewal of the agreement was signed in February 2015.

The Minsk agreements envisage a cease-fire, a withdrawal of heavy weaponry from the contact line, a prisoner exchange, and holding local elections in Donbass, among other measures.

Commenting on the murder, Lavrov said that under the present circumstances, it is impossible to hold a new round of the Normandy Four meeting involving Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany as Moscow is analyzing the "serious situation."

Zakharchenko, "president" of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, was killed after his car blew up near a restaurant in Donetsk city on Friday.

Zakharchenko, 42, was elected in November 2014 during the so-called regional "presidential elections," which were held in the insurgent-controlled areas in Ukraine's Donetsk and Lugansk regions, together known as Donbass, amid harsh criticism from Kiev. (Xinhua)

Oil Refinery Explosion in Southern Germany Injures Eight

BERLIN - Eight people were injured in a fire that followed an explosion in an oil refinery near southern German city Ingolstadt, local media reported.

The explosion took place early Saturday morning. Approximately 3,000 to 4,000 residents have been evacuated as a precautionary measure due to black smoke, reported local media "Bayerischer Rundfunk".

Local media, Focus online quoted the police as saying eight employees of the Bayernoil company were injured and three of them were hospitalized, some with serious injuries.

The cause of the detonation is still unclear. There are still several burning places on the site, the flames are not under control, the Focus Online reported. (Xinhua)

U.S., Canada Fail to Reach NAFTA Deal as Major Differences Remain

WASHINGTON - The United States and Canada failed to meet a Friday deadline imposed by the Trump administration to overhaul the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as major differences remain in bilateral talks.

"Our officials are continuing to work toward agreement," U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer said Friday in a statement, adding the USTR team will resume trade talks with its Canadian counterparts next Wednesday.

The White House has pressured Canada to accept the preliminary agreement it struck with Mexico on Monday to update the 24-year-old trilateral trade deal. But Canada insisted that it would only sign a new agreement that is good for the country.

"Canada will only sign a deal that's a good deal for Canada, we are very, very clear about that," Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland told reporters in Washington after wrapping up talks with U.S. officials on Friday.

One of the major sticking points in the talks is Canada's dairy market, according to media reports. Canada wants to keep its dairy system, known as supply management, while the United States complained that these agricultural policies will limit sales of U.S. dairy products to the Canadian market.

The White House had set Friday as the deadline to complete the NAFTA negotiations because it wanted to notify Congress in time for Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto to sign the new deal before his successor takes office on Dec. 1.

The Trump administration must notify Congress 90 days before signing a trade agreement, according to U.S. trade laws.

U.S. officials have indicated that they are prepared to go ahead and sign a NAFTA deal only with Mexico if they are unable to reach a deal quickly with Canada.

But the U.S. business community and many lawmakers have insisted that the NAFTA deal should remain a trilateral pact.

"Anything other than a trilateral agreement won't win congressional approval and would lose business support," President and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Thomas Donohue said Friday in a statement.

"We appreciate the hard work of the negotiators from all three countries, and urge them to stay at the table and remain focused on concluding a deal that includes the U.S., Mexico, and Canada," he said. (Xinhua)

Pakistan Appoints First Woman Chief Justice of High Court

ISLAMABAD - Justice Syeda Tahira Safdar sworn in on Saturday as first woman Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court, local media reported.

Justice Safdar, is the first woman to ever take the position of a high court chief justice in Pakistan.

Governor of Balochistan, Muhammad Khan Achakzai administered the oath to her at a ceremony held at the Governor House in Quetta. Senior judges and lawyers were also present during the ceremony. Justice Safdar is the 18th chief justice and was the most senior judge of Balochistan High Court after former Chief Justice Mohammad Noor Muskanzai.

She was also the first woman to be appointed as a civil judge in Balochistan and holds the distinction of being the first woman in the province to be appointed as a judge in Balochistan High Court. (Monitoring Desk)

Dutch Former Defence Minister Appointed UN Iraq Envoy

BAGHDAD - A Dutch former defence minister has been appointed as the United Nation's envoy to Iraq, to head a mission which plays an essential role in the country's political and economic spheres.

Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert was named special representative and will head up the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), a statement from the organisation said on Saturday.

She will replace Jan Kubis, a Slovak former foreign minister who took up the post in February 2015. During his tenure the mission tried to curb internal conflicts, such as the crisis which erupted between the autonomous Kurdish region and the central government in Baghdad.

Hennis-Plasschaert, 45, served as the Netherlands' defence minister from 2012 until 2017. (AFP)