Afghans cast ballots amid tight security

KABUL — People of Afghanistan began voting Thursday morning amid tight security to elect the country’s president and 420 members of the provincial councils. Some 17 million Afghans are eligible to vote while the turnout is expected to be lower than in 2004 as security situation is getting worse in most areas of the country.

In the capital city Kabul and other provinces, people are standing in queues casting their votes in favor of their candidates. There are 6,500 voting centers and some 29,000 polling booths throughout the country, but hundreds of polling stations are expected to be closed down due to security reasons.

Eight of Afghanistan’s 34 districts remain wholly under Taliban control and will not be able to hold elections, according to Interior Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar.

The voting coincided with Taliban-linked violent incidents in Kabul and some other cities, people are using their franchise to show their support for their candidates. There are 8 of Afghanistan’s 364 districts closed down due to security reasons.

Karzai government, got 26 percent. The American Election Commission said initial result of presidential election would be announced on Sept. 3 and official result will be finalized on Sept. 17.

The election is a test for U.S. troops in Afghanistan this year, Obama has deployed 30,000 extra troops in Afghanistan this year, increasing the total number of foreign troops to 100,000, including 63,000 Americans. The U.S. military said Wednesday six U.S. soldiers were killed in separate incidents in Ghormach district of northwest Herat province including their birthplace Kandahar but caused no loss of life.

The Obama administration has indicated that it will not insist on a “public option” as part of its overhaul of the US health care system. The move signals the abandonment of Washington’s fig leaf of “reform” in the administration’s cost-cutting health care scheme, it represents a complete capitulation to the insurance industry, which lobbied intensively against any government-run insurance plan.

“The public option, whether we have it or we don’t have it, is not the entirety of health care reform,” Obama stated at a town-hall meeting Saturday in Grand Junction, Colorado. “This is just one sliver of it, one aspect of it.”

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View Point

By Kate Randall

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