

(1) Afghanistan...

by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by IOM. Participants include representatives of the Afghan government, counter trafficking NGOs, civil society organizations and media.

"By passing a new trafficking law (in 2017), we have created a good foundation to respond to trafficking in a more comprehensive way," said Afghan Justice Minister and Chair of the TIP High Commission Dr. Abdul Basir Anwar. "I hope that the NGOs attending this forum can further strengthen our response to trafficking by increasing their cross-border cooperation."

The Afghan law on trafficking and smuggling was revised to help Afghan government officials to clearly distinguish between trafficking and smuggling of people, which were previously regarded as the same. By making the distinction, it offers better protection for the victims of both crimes.

According to the US State Department's TIP Report 2018, Afghanistan is a source, transit and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labour and sexual exploitation.

There is more internal than cross-border trafficking, but in recent years IOM has observed a steady increase in young women being trafficked to Afghanistan from neighboring countries, notably Pakistan.

Most Afghan victims of trafficking are women and children. While women are subjected to sexual and non-sexual exploitation, children are largely trafficked to work in carpet weaving and brick factories, domestic servitude, as bacha bazi (dancing boys) or for forced begging.

Victims are often sold by economically desperate families or kidnapped. As elsewhere, traffickers frequently subject their victims to coercion, violence and emotional abuse. Once abroad, traffickers usually confiscate their victims' travel documents, making trans-border cooperation essential in order to rescue them.

"Trafficking in persons is a serious concern in Afghanistan and its neighboring countries," said IOM Afghanistan Chief of Mission and Special Envoy Laurence Hart. "Promoting regional cooperation to help the Afghan government to effectively implement this new legislation is the central purpose of this forum."

The first counter-trafficking regional forum, which was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in June 2017, saw NGOs from participating countries agree to coordinate their efforts. Afghan NGOs subsequently formed the Afghanistan Network for Combating Trafficking in Persons (ANCTIP), which was officially launched in May 2018. The network has started to work in partnership with Pakistani counterparts and plans to collaborate with other neighboring countries.

"Our role is to establish and strengthen cross border coordination among NGOs and CSOs to better identify, refer and protect the victims and to prosecute the traffickers," said Mohammad Shoaib Nasiri, Country Director of forum co-organizer Fast Organization for Relief and Development (OFRD). (Monitoring Desk)

(2) Wolesi Jirga...

Earlier, the IEC had said it suggested delay in the elections due to lack of female candidates in District Council elections and flaws in the standards set for the district council elections.

In Ghazni, local residents kept the provincial IEC office closed for one

month, demanding constituency-based polls in Ghazni. So the election commission referred to the Ghazni issue and nation-wide district council polls to the NSC in line with article 104 of the Constitution.

The NSC committee comprised of NSC deputy head, heads of the two houses of parliament, the Chief Justice, Attorney General and head of the Independent Commission for Overseeing the Implementation of Constitution. The committee has the authority to delay the elections for at least four months during an emergency situation.

IEC deputy spokesman Merza Mohammad Haqparast said due to following reasons the district councils election may be delayed for four months.

No candidate registered in more than 40 districts

In 120 districts, no woman applied to contest the district council polls. In some districts, the number of candidates is equal to the seats so there is no chance for competition.

In line with the information of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), 364 districts are officially recognized while 11 districts are unofficially known in the country.

As a result of the existing crisis, the IEC referred the issue to the NSC one month earlier.

Haqparast added the NSC had not yet responded to the IEC regarding the election issue in Ghazni and district council polls.

"Elections in Ghazni may be delayed for four months and would be held along with District Councils polls," he said. (Pajhwok)

(3) Kandahar...

Kandahar Chamber of Commerce and Industry director Haji Nasrullah Zaheer told Pajhwok Afghan News that grape gardens in Kandahar were not damaged by pests this year --- a reason behind the boom in grape harvests.

He said another reason behind the increased exports of grapes was the use of plastic packs and fridge vehicles for transportation of the fruit. The new packaging and refrigerated vehicles helped Kandahar grapes reach Lahore, Islamabad and New Delhi markets without any damage, he added.

Zaheer said so far 12,000 tons of grapes had been exported from Kandahar and they were expecting the exports to reach 20,000 tons until the end of the season.

He added total grape intake in Kandahar was 50,000 tons last year when 20,000 tons of the fruit worth \$5 million was exported abroad. A cold storage in Shurandam area of Kandahar city could store 200 to 400 tons of grapes before being exported to Pakistan and India every day.

Officials of the cold storage say they package grapes in plastic packs and then keep them in the cold storage before exporting them to foreign markets.

Sayed Ahmad Agha, a manager of the cold storage, said that people now used new methods for exporting grapes abroad.

"In the past, grapes were transported in wooden packs and each of them cost 120 afghanis, now plastic packs are produced in the country and each costs 60 afghanis," he said. He said cold storages and refrigerated vehicles helped exporters dispatch the grapes intact to Pakistani and Indian markets.

Grapes in the past could not reach markets properly due to absence of cold storage system and standard packaging, he added.

Agha said currently a 15 kilograms of grapes were sold for 1,500 to 2,000 Pakistani rupees in Pakistan, benefitting traders enough there. Kandahar gardeners are happy

with the grapes production despite drought conditions this year.

A garden owner in Pashmoli area of Zheri district, told Pajhwok that thought the drought affected crops but grape gardens faced no pest attacks and the fruit harvests were better this year.

However, he asked the government to resolve shortage of water problem and build small and big dams for saving rainwater in Kandahar city and districts.

On the other hand, fresh fruits traders say they have so far faced no problem while exporting grapes or other fruits to Pakistan.

Haji Nanai Agha, head of the Fresh Fruits Traders Association in Kandahar, said that Chamber of Commerce and Industry officials met with Pakistani diplomats before exportation of fresh fruits to Pakistan and the problems were resolved.

He said that dozens of cargo trucks loaded with grapes and other fresh fruits arrived from Kandahar in Pakistan and India on a daily basis. (Pajhwok)

(4) \$5.6m Canadian...

including the lack of reflection on some crucial elements such as structural and long-term gender discrimination."

Compiled by Lattanzio and Seefar, the report referred to what it called a limited engagement of men in the project and a flawed implementation of the risks and mitigation strategies.

It also cited scant attention to the lack of political background and professional experience of the women. Most of the money went to the salaries and benefits of NDI workers and consultants delivering the project.

Security concerns in the country hurt the project between 2015 and 2016. NDI had to close offices temporarily in Kabul and Kandahar, and permanently in Kunduz. (Pajhwok)

(5) Call to Bring...

policy of successive governments over the years.

The exporters asked the federal government to take steps for the repatriation of Afghan nationals so that officials of relevant departments could support the local exporters. (Pajhwok)

(6) At Least 3,000...

destination," he remarked.

Similarly, Syed Askar complained he had no proper place for beekeeping in the winter season, affecting the production level and threatening the bee offspring in the reproduction season.

"In the winter, we are faced with food items. This year, two types of diseases have damaged all bee farms. The problem has become more acute due to non-availability of medicine," he added.

On the other hand, honey traders grumble about the absence of processing and packaging facilities. As a result, they are forced to sell high-quality honey at low prices.

One trader named Asadullah said they imported the required equipment from Pakistan. He demanded the establishment of such a facility in Gardez, the provincial capital.

"We have original honey, but the rate is dirt-cheap because we have no facilities 00 not even standard packages. Given the level of honey production here, Gardez should have a processing centre."

According to Asadullah, about 15 kinds of honey are available in Paktia, with one kilogram costing between 250 afghanis and 1,000af.

Agriculture and Livestock Director Walid Ahmad Tasal said about 100,000 bee boxes existed in Paktia. One box of bees produced seven kilograms of honey annually, he estimated.

Tasal acknowledged the business

was paid little attention. If properly processed, the honey could be exported to other countries, the director believed, stressing the appropriate supervision of the business.

Beekeepers have now formed an association, a move that would improve the apiculture sector in the province, the official continued.

Haji Abdullah, the beekeepers' association head, said there were 600 bee farms, with 200 boxes being kept in each farm. The business provided job opportunities for 3,000 people.

He called professional beekeeping, provision of facilities, standard production and marketing crucial to promoting apiculture. The association would strive for these facilities, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(7) Afghanistan's National...

Afghanistan and the British Empire in 1919, under which Afghanistan was given complete independence and another important letter, written by Timur, dating back to the 14th Century.

The building's interior design with its beautiful painted ceiling and carved woodwork is as praiseworthy as the archives' contents.

The structure was originally built by Amir Abdul Rahman Khan for his son and successor Amir Habibullah in 1892.

As is known regionally, the National Archives of Afghanistan also preserves some of the oldest historical manuscripts like the one dating back to the 1st AD and a holy Quran manuscript ascribed to Ottoman and Ali, the third and fourth Islamic caliphs, said Rahbin, who is also poet with 20 works published.

"Among the contracts signed with China, is a regionally valid agriculture scheme (Parwan Water-Supply), known as Parwan Project among the locals which irrigates wide areas of the province north of Kabul."

"We received the copy of the contract after approval from the country's National Assembly," the official said.

Despite several decades of devastating civil war and trafficking of numerous ancient relics from Afghanistan to other world countries, the archives remained intact. "Fortunately, the National Archives of Afghanistan is the only government-run institution that remained intact and safe from any kind of robbery and larceny, during civil conflicts."

Ordinary people, researchers and students are not visiting the still-war-affected country's archives as much as before and the institution has yet to generate any revenue.

According to the official, usually around 100 people, many of them students, visit the archives on a daily basis.

Rahbin who said he has never been to China, even during his tenure as Director of the Afghanistan National Archives, is expected to visit Chinese museums to understand which documents about his country are there.

"Farsi (an Afghan official language) was spoken widely in Kashgar and Tibet and even some itineraries and songs played in the Chinese ships were sung in Farsi, highlighting the two countries' close cultural relations."

"And considering one of the most valid contracts signed with China was in 1969, both Afghan and Chinese sides need to visit each other's archives to get information about both sides' cultural documents," said Rahbin.

The National Archives of Afghanistan is housed in its own century building, located on the main road in the Salang Watt in Deh Afghanistan neighborhood, in central Kabul. The main task of the National Archives is the protection of Afghani-

stan's historical memory so that the future generations can learn about their proud historical and cultural past. One of the main goals of the entity is the establishment of a link between past and future generations through the protection of cultural-historical documentary sources, according to Rahbin.

Commenting on relations between China and Afghanistan, the official went on to say that business and trade relations had been improved between Afghanistan and China within the past decade, but Afghans hope for more promotion between two countries in cultural and educational fields. (Xinhua)

(8) 73 Taliban...

, seven others wounded and their two military vehicles torched in the battle that lasted two hours.

However, the military convoy reached the military base in Qaisar district at 11:40 Monday without further impediment.

The Taliban also claimed attacking ANA convoys in Chaharshamba, Chehilgazai and Chichektowi areas of Qaisar district.

The group said dozens of security forces suffered casualties and 14 forces were captured alive and tens of military vehicles torched in the attack that left 10 rebel fighters wounded. (Pajhwok)

(9) Fayab Mother...

"The same night, I saw my father strangulating my mother and stabbing her with the knife 10 to 15 times, when I shouted, my father fled," said the boy.

The Pashtunkot District Chief confirmed the killing of Zarmina and said the murderer was at large after the killing of Zarmina and had sought refuge in an area which was under Taliban's control.

Hameedullah Azeemi, acting head of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AI-HRC) for Faryab, asked security institutions to arrest the killer and hand him over to the authority concerned.

He said 25 incidents of murder and suicide were registered during the first six months of this solar year. (Pajhwok)

Concerns Raised Over 'Planned Taliban Attack' on Gardez City

KABUL - Paktia officials warned on Tuesday of a planned Taliban attack against Gardez city.

Provincial police chief Raz Mohammad Mandozai said that Taliban were planning to conduct a group attack on the city and that security had been tightened up.

However, he raised concerns over not having enough security forces in the city.

"For the past few months and especially after the Ghazni incident, based on intelligence information, there are some threats against Paktia's districts and the capital Gardez city but security measures are being taken because insurgents will take their dreams with them to the grave if they attack Paktia districts and the center like they did in Ghazni," Mandozai said.

Meanwhile, Paktia residents and provincial council members said that if central government does not pay attention to their concerns the city will fall to the Taliban.

"Taliban leadership is mostly controlled by the foreign Taliban and they want to conduct the same attack on Gardez city, like Ghazni, and other districts because there are lots of insurgents that exist in parts of the city," said Taj Mohammad Mangal Paktia provincial council member.

"Almost all the districts of the province are under threat," said Mohammad Rahman Qadiri another provincial council member. (Tolo news)