Almost 400 MoUs Signed at Afghan-India Trade Show

KABUL – Members of the private sector from Afghanistan, India and other countries have signed up to 400 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and trade contracts at the 2nd annual Afghanistan-India International Trade and Investment Show held in Mumbai in the past two days. Among the MoUs is an agreement between Afghan and Indian companies to establish a large pharmacy and an agriculture development bank. Exports to India and import and export with Indian traders are also planned.

“At around 400 MoUs in the last two days! Over $15 million in dollar-value deals,” said Ramin, head of economic development at UMAHS, as he talked to a gathering of Afghan and foreign investors in India. Kam Air officials meanwhile said their cargo flights will carry more goods to India as agreed at the event.

“Our daily flights will be from Kabul to Delhi and from Delhi it can be transformed to different parts of India and elsewhere. At the beginning, we transport 25 tons of cargo every day which will be increased and then this amount can be increased,” said Ramin. (More on P4)

Afghanistan Assessing New Options for Exports to Australia

KABUL – Afghan, Australian and Indian negotiators held discussions over expanding Afghan-Australian trade relations with the region and beyond on the sidelines of the 13th annual Afghan-Indian International Trade and Investment Show in India’s Mumbai city.

Addressing an event in Mumbai, Aimal Ahmad, President Ghani’s advisor on economic affairs, said Afghan companies can export goods to Australia through Chabahar port as well as via Karachi.

The officials discussed opening of new trade routes between the three countries for expanding trade relations.

Aimal also said the National Unity Government is working on establishing travel corridors through India, Indonesia, Turkey, and China to Afghanistan. He said India can play a crucial role in this regard.

“The question is important now but it also becomes increasingly important once we begin to ramp up our mineral sector. So how obviously Chabahar port is a key issue which we are also looking to advance our export options,” said Aimal.

“The idea is to see how Afghan goods will reach India. From Indian officials, we can work more on it so that we take it Australian markets,” said Wahidullah Waisi, Afghanistan’s Ambassador in Australia.

Meanwhile, Australian analysts said establishing transit routes between Afghanistan and Australia will benefit economies of the two countries.

The analysts said there are good market opportunities in Afghanistan’s sugar, cotton, and dry and fresh fruits. Zalmai, a university lecturer from Afghanistan University, said their cargo flights will carry more goods to India as agreed at the event.

“Our daily flights will be from Kabul to Delhi and from Delhi it can be transformed to different parts of India and elsewhere. At the beginning, we transport 25 tons of cargo every day which will be increased and then this amount can be increased,” said Ramin. (More on P4)

Political Parties Close IEC Offices in Three Provinces

The political parties have set deadlines for government to address its demands. Last time on August 10, the political parties set a 10-day deadline for government to meet their demands on a change in election system and ensure that biometric system is used in the day of voting.

The parties include the Council of Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, Hizb-e-Wahdat Islami Mandarin and some political movements including Melanie-Mandarin-Afghanistan.

The political parties also levelled serious “...” (More on P4)

Afghan Refugees’ Living Conditions Improved in Iran, Pakistan: MoRR

NEW DELHI - India’s budget airline Spicjet this week announced it had linked up with the Afghan-Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACC) to run cargo operations between Delhi and Kabul.

Spicjet plans to transport 1,200 tons of cargo every week in brighter overall air cargo partnership, the airline said in a statement.

“...” (Spicjet, SpiceExpress) (More on P4)

Spicjet Express started operations from September 18, 2010, will function as a separate business unit under Spicjet Limited. SpiceJet has linked up with a detailed plan covering both domestic and international routes. To begin with the air cargo operations will cover Delhi, Bengaluru, Guwahati, Hong Kong, Kabul and Amritsar.” (Spicjet, SpiceExpress) (More on P4)

Nimroz Residents Ask Govt to Counter Iranian Rial

ZARANI - Residents of southeastern Nimroz province say they are concerned about the prevalence of Iranian rial in the province, asking the government to prevent transactions in the foreign currency.

They say all deals in the province are done in Iranian rial and the fall of the Iranian currency against the Afghan has created problems for local people.

Mohammad Nadeem, a shopkeeper in Zarani, the capital of Nimroz, told Pajhwok, Afghan News that all transactions even daily household items were done in Iranian rial in the province. Using the Iranian rial has become a culture, he said. The fall of the currency has caused prices to soar significantly, so people cannot purchase things, he said. He said one afghani was previously accounted for 600 Iranian rials but now one afghani valued 1,270 Iranian rials.

“The price of one bread increased from 10,000 rials to 50,000, and even 40,000 rials and a bag of rice now has jumped from 250,000 to 400,000 rials while the income of a daily wage earner is 100,000 rial to 200,000 rial a day,” he said.

Ahmad said shopkeepers purchased goods in afghani, dollar and Pakistani rupee but they sold them in the Iranian rial. Jamma Khan, a laborer in Nimroz, said: “Two kilograms of flour over 200,000 rials, 100,000 afghani a day, but now I earn up to 200,000 rials (130 afghani) which is enough to only purchase bread.”

Mohammad Nadeem, a tailor in Zarani city, said that previously he would charge 100,000 rials for a shirt, but now he charged a reduced 140 afghani.

He asked the government to prevent dealing in Iranian rial in Nimroz so people were able to purchase things at normal prices. Mohammed, a resident of Nimroz, said people wanted to use the Afghan currency, but shopkeepers did not accept them because they were not familiar with the Afghan currency.

“When I asked about a kilogram of grapes, the shopkeeper refused.” (More on P4)