

(1) Afghan Refugees...

have been resident in both countries since fleeing the Soviet War in Afghanistan during the 1980s. Despite the success of voluntary repatriation programmes both in Pakistan and Iran, many Afghan refugees have specific needs, vulnerabilities and protection concerns that prevent their return.

In addition, the volatile security situation and human rights violations in Afghanistan remain an ongoing concern. (ATN)

(2) Almost 400 MoUs...

Yuresh, head of business affairs of Kam Air.

Meanwhile, an MoU was signed between Afghan Chamber of Mines and Industries, Afghan-American Joint Chamber and Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Gujarat.

Some Afghan investors who attended the event said they see an improvement in the country's manufacturing sector.

"Afghan investors have something to say. Afghanistan's industries have improved compared with the past. The participation of the Afghan industries in this show is an example of this claim," said Sherbaz Kaminzada, CEO of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

The exhibition was inaugurated by CEO Abdullah Abdullah, John Bass, US Ambassador to Afghanistan, Subhash Desai, India's Minister for Industries and Mining and other officials on September 12.

On the sidelines of the show, Afghan and foreign experts have discussed ways to increase Afghanistan's trade relations with India and beyond that with Australia and Indonesia.

Addressing an event in Mumbai on Friday, Ajmal Ahmadi, President Ashraf Ghani's advisor on economic affairs, said Afghanistan can export goods to Australia through Chabahar port as well as via India and Indonesia routes.

The officials discussed opening of sea routes and air corridors between the three countries for expanding trade and transit relations. Ahmadi said the National Unity Government is working on establishing transit corridors through India, Indonesia, Turkey and China to Australia. He said India can play a crucial role in this regard.

The first such trade show was organized in New Delhi last year. Indian buyers and Afghan vendors signed over \$27 million in contracts for raw and processed agricultural products, and a number of Indian buyers and Afghan vendors signed Memorandums of Understanding valued at nearly \$214 million at that expo.

This time around, more than 600 representatives from Afghanistan, India and international businesses are expected to attend the trade show, featuring Afghanistan's finest products.

More than 50 agriculture exporters from Afghanistan are currently in the city to explore business tie-ups as well as to showcase their finest agriculture products including fruits, nuts and spices buyers from Maharashtra and neighboring states.

In July, a two-day trade mission exhibition 'Made in Afghanistan: Nature's Best' was held in New Delhi and business deals worth \$78 million were signed, the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry said in a statement.

By 2020, bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan was expected to reach more than \$2 billion. The expo would help develop economic ties between Afghanistan and international markets, and further advance trade integration, according to reports. (Tolo news)

(3) Political Parties...

accusations on government leaders over what they described it deliberate attempts to deprive the people from the right to be informed about all aspects of free and credible elections.

President Ghani's Decree On Elections

Last month, President Ashraf Ghani issued a decree on elections to prevent any interference in the election process and to ensure the process is held in a safe and transparent environment.

The decree was issued amid growing complaints over government's "lack of commitment" in terms of holding transparent parliamentary elections in October.

The decree reads:

- Officials and employees of government departments including military, defense and civilian institutions, judiciaries and the Supreme Court officials must avoid interference in parliamentary and district council elections.

- Defense and security forces must not enter voter registration, polling and vote counting centers arbitrarily. They can get permission of responsible officials in case of need.

- Taking guns into voter registration, polling and vote counting centers is forbidden.

- Security and defense forces must ensure the security of officials and the central and provincial offices of the independent election commission and the independent electoral complaints commission, voter registration centers, polling stations and vote counting centers.

- Security forces must prevent the entrance of security guards of government officials and irresponsible armed individuals to voter registration centers, polling stations and vote counting centers.

- Government officials cannot use government resources in the electoral process in favor or against one or more candidates.

- Ministry of Interior Affairs is responsible to deploy enough female police force members in order to ensure more presence of women in elections.

- The Independent Election Commission and Independent Electoral Complaints Commission should inform relevant offices in case of any interference by officials in elections.

- Security and defense institutions must legally act against violators of this decree and send them to judicial organizations.

- Head of the relevant committee shall report to the Presidential Palace on the implementation of this decree.

Govt Considers SMTV System For Elections

The Afghan government is considering the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system for the elections, however political parties and movements have asked for the use of the multi-dimensional representation (MDR) for the elections.

The SNTV is an electoral system used in multi-member constituency elections. In any election, each voter casts one vote for one candidate in a multi-candidate race for multiple offices. Posts are filled by the candidates with the most votes. Thus, in a three-seat constituency, the three candidates receiving the largest number of votes would win office.

The cost of the SNTV system is less but analysts said it has more defects.

It is believed that the system will mostly benefit independent candidates.

"In total, it (the SNTV system) increases complications, votes are wasted and finally in this system, parliament will not be party-based. It means that parliament groups cannot be better formed under this system," Mohammad Naeem Ayubzada, head of the Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan, told TOLONews on August 18. With the MDR system, a vote can be transferred from one candidate to another which makes it different from the SNTV system. In this system, political parties and independent candidates will compete. In this system, political parties can have one candidate or they can introduce a candidate in coalition with other parties. Independent candidates mean-

while can compete alone or they can take part in the election in collaboration with other independent candidates.

With the MDR system, if a party has at least 10 candidates, their candidates votes- that exceed the required number- can be transferred to other candidates from the same party. The same can be applied to independent candidates if they make an agreement.

Electoral watchdog organizations said the MDR system has its complications and is not applicable considering the little time remaining to October parliamentary elections. Use Of 'Modern Technology' For Elections

President Ashraf Ghani last month directed the Central Statistic Organization (CSO) to use "modern technology" to specify the exact number of voters who will cast their votes at polling stations on election day.

According to Ghani's decree issued in August, the CSO should cooperate with the Independent Election Commission (IEC), security agencies and other relevant institutions in determining the exact number of registered voters.

In the decree, the Ministry of Finance and the National Procurement Authority have been ordered to cooperate with the CSO and other departments in the allocation of budget and procurement for the technology.

Afghanistan's Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA) has said that they are ready to help the CSO determine the voter numbers. The decree does not state details about whether a biometric system will be used to identify voters on election day.

According to the Independent Election Commission, over nine million voters have registered their names for the upcoming elections. (Tolo news)

(4) Afghanistan...

Australia, said they are looking forward to establish an effective framework to ease trade and transit between Afghanistan, India and Australia.

"There is real potential for producers in Afghanistan to partner with producers in India to see where they can jointly cooperate and sale overseas particularly in Australia," Nishang Mutwani, financial expert in India said.

According to government statistics, the trade volume between Afghanistan and Australia is around \$10 million a year and part of Afghan exports to Australia includes carpets as well as precious and semi-precious stones. (Tolo news)

(5) Nimroz Residents...

told me it costs 70,000 rial, but when I gave him afghanis, he refused to take them, then I had to exchange the afghanis to rial and to continue my shopping," he said.

Daud, another dweller, expressed concern over the hike in goods prices.

Mullah Gul Ahmad Ahmadi, a provincial council member, said deals in foreign currency were rime under the country's laws, but people still used rial in Nimroz. He hoped the fall in the Iranian currency would encourage local people to use the afghani.

Mohammad Naim Sayedi, Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) head for Nimroz, said people should shun transactions in foreign currency as the government alone could not deal with the matter.

"There is enough notes of the afghani in Nimroz and I have repeatedly told traders and shopkeepers in the province to use Afghan currency. Awareness in this regard is being spread through media and billboards."

He said some people were fined using rial in the province, but it was not effective.

Governor Dr. SayedWali Sultan also expressed concern over the use of rial in Nimroz and said deals in foreign currencies were no longer acceptable to the local administra-

tion. (Pajhwok)

(6) 'Pakistan Considering...

expressed a willingness to start talking with its Afghan counterparts for parameters to enabling trade between India and Afghanistan through Pakistan," he said. The US ambassador to Afghanistan spoke to ET on the sidelines of the India-Afghanistan Trade and Investment show being held in Mumbai. He said that Indian firms had been investing in Afghanistan's growth and that last year's trade show in Delhi had led to \$27 million of investments at the event itself, and another \$200 million of "prospective" investments from Indian companies, much of which had materialised.

Bass said a political settlement in Afghanistan was in "Pakistan's long-term interest". "Increased trade in both directions, increased connectivity through central and south Asia through Afghanistan - those are all missed opportunities if Pakistan has its sole focus on perpetuating the status quo," he said.

The envoy acknowledged that the Indian government had brought up the issue of US sanctions on Iran and how it would impact Chabahar port in Iran when US secretary of state Mike Pompeo and defence secretary Jim Mattis were in India last week. He said that the Indian government in the discussions with the two US officials conveyed India's perspectives "on the importance of Chabahar as a means to expand bilateral trade and help improve Afghanistan's connectivity with South Asia".

Bass further said, "We are processing and evaluating how best to reimpose sanctions on Iran, with the Irani regime's malevolent behaviour and its activities in destabilising its neighbours. My government is still thinking through how Chabahar factors in the reimposition of the toughest sanctions that we believe need to be put in place to hold the Iranian government accountable for its action." He said that the "matter is still very much under discussion, and consideration and review as per the policy process in Washington".

Bass said the US did not believe that the conflict in Afghanistan would end with a military victory. "No one in the US government is saying at this point that we expect this conflict to end with a military victory. We believe that this conflict will end with a political settlement," he said. (Monitoring Desk)

(7) ONSC Reacts...

position due to the existing differences he has with the government leadership on political level as well the government's approach in maintain peace and stability in the country.

However, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has said he has accepted the resignation of Mohammad Hanif Atmar, the former National Security Adviser, considering the grand national interests of the country. (KP)

(8) 'ID Cards with...

said the PRD had lost its stamp months ago and it was not possible to differentiate between a fake and an original ID card as the stamps looked the same.

Jafari feared fake ID cards could lead to widespread rigging in the Oct 20 parliamentary elections.

Meanwhile, Hamza Nazari, a PRD official, also confirmed to Pajhwok the losing of their department's stamp since the month of Ramadan. He said the matter had been shared with all security organizations and the governor's house.

He did not rule out the presence of fake national ID cards but said fake ID cards could be identified with data to be received from the IEC main office in Kabul.

"In several villages, I have seen electoral stickers attached to ID cards whose owners had died between two years and eight years ago, but," said one source, who did not want to be named.

He assured of sharing the issue with media once such ID cards

were brought to polling stations on the election day.

However, Ahmad Shah Qanuni, the IEC regional office director, told Pajhwok the PC should share such allegations with their office for investigation.

To have transparent elections, he said, they dispatched all ID cards distribution and voter registration books to the central office to find out fake ID cards.

He said 170 polling centers existed in the province and their department was busy designating more centers and sharing their presence with security officials. (Pajhwok)

(9) 25 Taliban Suffer...

and security forces was fierce.

The Taliban have not yet commented in this regard. (Pajhwok)

(10) Pentagon Awards...

"Sierra Nevada Corp., Centennial, Colorado, has been awarded a ceiling \$1,808,000,000 indefinite-delivery/indefinite quantity contract for potential procurement, sustainment, modifications, ferry, and related equipment for the A-29," Pentagon said in a statement issued nearly two weeks ago.

The statement further added "Work will be performed at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia; and Kabul, Kandahar, and Mazari Sharif Air Bases, Afghanistan. Work is expected to be completed by Dec. 31, 2024. This contract involves foreign military sales to Afghanistan." (KP)

(11) Residents Want...

he blackmails families into paying him lots of money.

"Today, a government official told me that Rassoul has deposited one and a half million afghanis in a Turkish bank. He amassed the money from a family, whose women were sexually abused by the amulet seller," he claimed.

Rassoul should be arrested and stoned to death, demanded Ghafoori, who has shared the issue with Ulema Council, elders, the provincial spymaster and the governor. However, he regretted, no action had been taken yet against the imposter.

The man is currently enjoying safety in an area of Pashtunkot district controlled by ALP Commander Azim, he said, adding the NDS had refused to arrest the man who is fighting against the rebels.

He warned if stern action was not taken against Rassoul, the people of Faryab would stop supporting the government.

Sibghatullah Selab, deputy chairman of the provincial council, said the videos were four years old. The man's real name is Rassoul Landai, who had earlier fled to Turkey after his activities were exposed.

However, he returned to the country and lost his cell-phone that contained immoral videos of innocent women.

The governor, along with several security officials, visited Pashtunkot to arrest Rassoul, but he had gone into hiding, the public representative explained.

Security organs called on Afghan Local Police (ALP) Commander Azim to immediately arrest the amulet seller and hand him over to judicial organs.

Meanwhile, residents of Faryab asked the government to arrest the cheater at the earliest possible and thereby put a stop to the humiliation of women.

Mohammad Azim, an ALP commander, said Rassoul - along with his father Naeem Charek - were residents of the district. Later on, they went to Turkey and returned after two months and joined public uprising forces against the Taliban.

He learnt of Rassoul's immoral activities via Facebook. "Yesterday, I tried to arrest and bring to justice, but he managed to escape to an unknown place." (Pajhwok)

(12) Taliban Capture...

the situation was having a negative effect on Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital. He urged the security forces to take measures to control the situation as soon as possible. (Pajhwok)