

CLAWS Newsletter



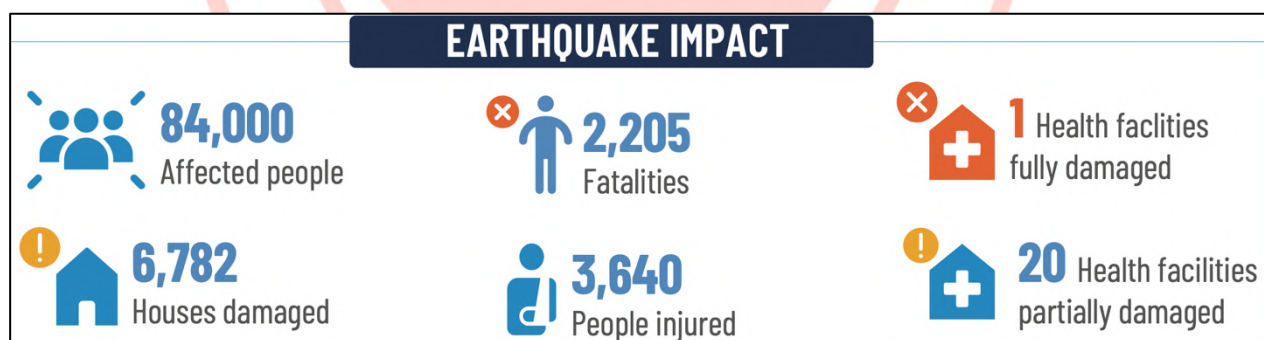
Afghanistan Khabar Pana | Volume I | No. 14

by Akashika Mate

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. Series of Quakes Devastates Eastern Afghanistan, Death Toll Surpasses 2,200 (Reuters, September 02; Reuters, September 05; WHO Situation Report, September 11)

A series of powerful earthquakes has devastated eastern Afghanistan, leaving more than 2,200 people dead, at least 3,640 people injured, and tens of thousands displaced, as aid groups warn of dwindling resources and an unfolding humanitarian crisis. The first tremor, a magnitude 6 quake on August 31, struck at a shallow depth of 10 km in the mountainous provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar, flattening villages and destroying nearly 6,800 homes. Afghan authorities described it as one of the deadliest earthquakes in recent years. The toll climbed further on September 02, when another 6.0-magnitude quake struck the same region, killing more than 1,100 people and injuring thousands. On September 4, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake shook southeastern Afghanistan, the German Research Centre for Geosciences reported, marking the third major tremor. With its epicentre in Nangarhar's remote Shiwa district near the Pakistan border, the latest quake triggered landslides and blocked roads, further complicating already difficult rescue and relief operations. Health officials said that search operations remain underway in hard-to-reach areas, though access is limited by rugged terrain and aftershocks.



Source: WHO Situation report no. 9 | 11 Sept 2025

Survivors are facing a bleak future without shelter as international relief efforts struggle to keep pace with the scale of destruction. The United Nations and humanitarian agencies have warned of an urgent need for food, medical supplies, and temporary housing. Nearly 4,98,000 people require immediate health assistance, including more than 11,600 pregnant women, who face heightened risks in overcrowded and unsanitary shelters. Aid workers note that women and

girls are particularly vulnerable, lacking access to gender-sensitive services in both health facilities and camps.

2. Afghanistan Remains Among World's Least Peaceful Nations in 2025 Global Peace Index (Khaama Press, September 01)

Afghanistan has been placed 158th out of 163 countries in the [2025 Global Peace Index](#), underscoring its fragile governance, political instability, and persistent humanitarian crises, despite a decline in active conflict since the Taliban's return to power. The Index, published annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), measures factors such as internal security, levels of conflict, political stability, access to small arms, and military expenditure. Afghanistan has risen two places from last year's ranking of 160th, yet it remains highly unstable. The report identifies Afghanistan as the fifth country in the world where peace is virtually absent. It is the only South Asian nation to score the lowest possible ratings for violent crime, access to small arms, political terror, displacement of populations, and military costs. Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Ukraine follow Afghanistan among the most insecure nations. Russia has, for the first time, joined the list of the "least peaceful" countries, reflecting wider global trends of political unrest and conflict escalation. In contrast, Iceland, Ireland, New Zealand, Austria, and Switzerland have been ranked the most peaceful nations. Globally, the findings point to a continuing decline in peace, with 59 active state-level conflicts recorded in the past year—the highest since the end of the Second World War.

3. Taliban Bans Ministries from Contracting with Taliban-Affiliated Companies (Khaama Press, September 06)

Taliban Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has signed a new law prohibiting government ministries and departments from entering into contracts with companies affiliated with the Taliban. The legislation, announced by the Ministry of Justice, is structured into four chapters and 40 articles. It stresses the importance of procuring high-quality materials, ensuring fair pricing, and awarding projects to reliable and trustworthy companies. The move comes amid mounting concerns over the Taliban's entrenched role in Afghanistan's lucrative resource

sector. Over the past three years, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum alone has signed contracts worth an estimated \$8 billion with both domestic and foreign companies for the extraction of copper, gold, iron, and oil across provinces, including Herat, Takhar, Logar, and Sar-e-Pul. Observers point out that Taliban members already hold substantial stakes in most of Afghanistan's major mining and extraction projects, giving them considerable influence over the country's mineral wealth. While the law formally bans ministries from contracting Taliban-linked firms, questions remain about enforcement and oversight in the absence of independent compliance mechanisms. Analysts suggest that unless strict monitoring and transparent procurement practices are put in place, the law risks being more symbolic than substantive, given the group's deep-rooted economic and political interests in Afghanistan's natural resources.

4. UN Urges Taliban to Lift Ban on Afghan Women Staff Amid Earthquake Crisis (UN News, September 11)

The United Nations in Afghanistan has called on the Taliban authorities to immediately lift restrictions barring Afghan women staff and contractors from entering UN premises, warning that the measures are putting life-saving humanitarian assistance at risk. In a statement, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said the ban, first enforced in Kabul on September 07, has since been extended to UN field offices nationwide, with Taliban security forces deployed at entrances in Kabul, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif. The restrictions have also curtailed the ability of female UN staff to travel to field locations, including areas hit by the devastating earthquake in eastern Afghanistan, where women are among the most vulnerable. Reports indicate they are also being blocked from accessing operational sites that support Afghan returnees from Iran and Pakistan. The mission warned that the obstruction of UN operations violates international norms on the privileges and immunities of UN personnel. The UN said it is engaging Taliban authorities but underscored that lifting the restrictions is critical to continuing essential services for hundreds of thousands of people, especially women and girls, at a time of overlapping crises.

5. Construction of Grand Pamir Road Begins in Badakhshan (Tolo News, September 12)

Work has officially begun on the Grand Pamir Road in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province, a strategic infrastructure project led by the Ministry of Defence that is expected to transform connectivity in one of the country's most remote regions. The road will stretch 150 kilometres in length and seven metres in width, starting from Gazkhan in Wakhan district and extending to Zorkul Lake in the Greater Pamir. Officials report that 30 per cent of the project has already been completed. Project head Mohammad Rahim Abed emphasised the significance of the initiative, noting that the new route will provide a reliable corridor through the high-altitude Wakhan region, which borders Tajikistan, China, and Pakistan, making it a potential gateway for regional trade. For residents, the project promises to ease long-standing hardships. Currently, villagers rely on horses and yaks to traverse the 120-kilometre stretch from Gazkhan to the Greater Pamir, a journey that takes three to four days. With the road, the travel time is expected to shrink dramatically.

6. Kandahar-Uruzgan Highway Construction Launched with 790M Afghani Budget (Tolo News, September 13; The Kabul Times/Facebook, September 14)

The Ministry of Public Works has announced the launch of the Kandahar-Uruzgan highway construction project, a key infrastructure initiative budgeted at 790 million Afghanis. The highway is expected to be completed within the next two years. According to officials, the project will cover a 25-kilometre stretch from Shah Wali Kot district in Kandahar to Uruzgan province. Public Works Minister Mohammad Isa Thani confirmed that 350 million Afghanis will be allocated this year alone to kick-start the project, which officially began on September 13. Authorities have pledged that the road will be built in accordance with international engineering standards. Uruzgan Governor Enayatullah Shuja stressed the importance of quality, warning that shortcuts could undermine long-term benefits. Local security has also been assured, with Uruzgan Police Chief Mohammad Rafiq Khadem stating that conditions are favourable for implementing it successfully. Project engineer Mohammad Ajmal Mishal echoed this commitment, promising modern, high-quality construction. Residents welcomed

the project, citing its potential to improve daily life and stimulate the local economy. The Kandahar-Uruzgan highway has a total length of 173 kilometres, parts of which are already in use. Completion of the remaining stretches is expected to significantly enhance connectivity, trade, and mobility in southern Afghanistan.

7. Afghan Media Watchdog Warns of Escalating Threats to Press Freedom (Khaama Press, September 14; MENAFN, September 14)

The [Afghanistan Media Support Organisation \(AMSO\)](#) has warned that intensifying restrictions by Taliban authorities are pushing Afghanistan's press to the brink of collapse, silencing journalists and limiting public access to information. AMSO said it was deeply alarmed by escalating intimidation, including death threats against journalists in recent days. The watchdog highlighted a series of new restrictions:

- In Balkh, the Taliban-controlled national broadcaster has banned the airing of images;
- In Panjshir, all visual media activities have been suspended; and,
- In Kandahar, authorities have prohibited the production of YouTube content, further narrowing space for independent reporting.

The group described these curbs as a serious blow to press freedom, underscoring that the free flow of information in Afghanistan is being systematically dismantled. Concerns deepened after Mohammad Omar Mokhles, a former Taliban police chief in Paktia, revealed that Taliban forces had actively plotted to kill journalists, though some targeted individuals reportedly managed to escape. Observers note that the growing restrictions reflect a wider campaign of censorship and intimidation aimed at silencing critical voices. With Afghanistan's independent press already under severe pressure, media advocates warn that without sustained international attention and pressure, the country risks a near-total collapse of press freedom under Taliban rule.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Kam Air Signs Interline Agreement with Uzbekistan Airways (Tolo News, September 01; Kursiv Media Uzbekistan, September 02)

Afghan carrier Kam Air has signed an interline cooperation agreement with Uzbekistan Airways, a move expected to expand international connectivity and reduce travel costs for Afghan passengers. The agreement allows Afghan travellers to transit through Tashkent International Airport on Kam Air flights from Afghanistan and then connect onward with Uzbekistan Airways to destinations across Europe, the United States, and beyond. Kam Air CEO Jahed Azimi hailed the agreement as a major step forward, stating that this is a very good facility for our compatriots. In addition to its existing five weekly flights to Istanbul, Kam Air also announced the launch of flights to Istanbul's Sabiha Gökçen Airport. Initially, there will be two weekly flights, with plans to expand to daily services in the future. Economic experts have welcomed the move, saying that such partnerships will increase convenience, lower travel costs, and contribute to economic growth, stating that Afghan airlines must collaborate with international carriers to remain competitive and ensure long-term progress.

2. Updates from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

a. SCO Urges Inclusive Government in Afghanistan for Lasting Stability (Afghanistan International, September 01; Ariana News, September 02)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has renewed calls for the establishment of an inclusive government in Afghanistan, stressing that representation of all ethnic and political groups is vital to achieving lasting peace and stability. In a joint statement released at the conclusion of its two-day summit in Tianjin, SCO member states underlined the need for Afghanistan to remain “independent, neutral, and free from terrorism, war, and narcotics.” The statement reaffirmed the grouping's support for global efforts to foster peace and development in the country. The summit, attended by more than 20 world leaders, notably did not include representatives of the Taliban. SCO leaders agreed that only a broadly representative and inclusive Afghan government can provide a stable foundation for the country's future. Member states pledged to continue backing Afghanistan's integration into regional development

frameworks, while also urging Kabul to engage constructively with international stakeholders. The absence of Taliban representation at this year's summit highlights the diplomatic hurdles facing Kabul, with the international community maintaining pressure for political inclusivity as a prerequisite for recognition and engagement.

b. SCO Members Hold Consultative Meeting on Afghanistan in Tajikistan
(Khaama Press, September 11; Embassy of Tajikistan in India, September 12; Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, September 13)

Member states of the SCO held a consultative meeting in Tajikistan this week to review the evolving situation in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on rising terrorism and regional security threats. Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mohammad Sadiq, confirmed that the session underlined the need for greater convergence and coordinated strategies among SCO members. On the sidelines, Sadiq met with Khusrav Sobirzoda, Tajikistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, where the two officials held detailed discussions on regional challenges and avenues for cooperation. According to Sadiq, talks centred on the escalation of terrorism in the region and the importance of crafting a joint, coordinated counterterrorism approach. No further details of the official agenda were made public.

3. India Announces 1,000 Online Scholarships for Afghan Students
(Khaama Press, September 02; News On Air, September 02)

The Government of India has announced 1,000 e-scholarships for Afghan nationals to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate courses online under the Special Scholarship Scheme for Afghan Nationals (SSSAN) for the academic year 2025-26. The scholarships will be facilitated by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) through the e-VidyaBharati (e-VB) i-learn portal, enabling Afghan students to study remotely at Indian universities and institutions while continuing to reside in Afghanistan. The scholarships cover a wide range of online UG and PG courses across multiple disciplines, ensuring that Afghan students have access to international-quality education despite mobility restrictions and local challenges. In the previous academic year, ICCR supported hundreds of Afghan students through similar online scholarships, enabling them to continue higher education at a critical time. The continuation of this

programme for 2025-26 reflects New Delhi's sustained effort to support Afghanistan's younger generation, ensuring that they remain connected to quality higher education and future opportunities despite the country's ongoing difficulties.

4. Afghanistan and Iran Discuss Expansion of Trade at Islam Qala Border (Tolo News, September 04)

Afghan and Iranian economic delegations met at the Islam Qala border crossing in Herat to discuss ways of expanding bilateral trade and addressing transit challenges. The meeting brought together representatives from Afghanistan's Ministries of Industry and Commerce, Mines and Petroleum, Agriculture, Finance, and Customs, alongside officials from Iran's Trade Promotion Organisation. Sibghatullah Akhundzada, Head of Investment at Afghanistan's Ministry of Industry and Commerce, said that trade relations between the two neighbours are steadily improving, adding that "no obstacles currently exist in this regard." Delegates from both sides agreed to work on resolving transit issues, improving coordination, and reducing trade costs. Emphasis was placed on the development of infrastructure at the border crossings. Abdosada Neisi, Assistant to the Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organisation, highlighted the need for further expansion at Islam Qala customs in Afghanistan and Dogharoun customs in Iran to facilitate smoother trade flows. According to officials, annual trade exchanges between Afghanistan and Iran through the Islam Qala–Dogharoun crossing currently amount to approximately \$4 billion, making it one of the most significant trade corridors for both countries. The talks underscore the growing economic interdependence between Kabul and Tehran, even as broader regional politics remain complex.

5. Developments with Pakistan

a. Pakistan Claims Over 8,000 TTP Militants Have Entered Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Khaama Press, September 09)

Pakistani authorities have claimed that more than 8,000 militants of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have crossed into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Afghanistan, fuelling a sharp rise

in terrorist incidents across the province. According to local media reports, the militants infiltrated through undisclosed border routes and have since dispersed across multiple districts, including Peshawar, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, and Swat. Official data paints a grim picture: in just the first eight months of 2025, over 600 terrorist incidents were recorded in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These attacks claimed the lives of 138 civilians and 79 policemen, leaving hundreds more injured. In August alone, 129 incidents were reported, with the highest concentration in Bannu, North and South Waziristan, and Dir. Officials acknowledged that both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have borne the brunt of recent militant violence, owing to their long and porous border with Afghanistan.

b. 19 Soldiers Martyred and 35 TTP Terrorists Killed in KP Operations (Dawn, September 13; DG ISPR/X, September 13)

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif pledged that Pakistan would continue to respond to terrorism with “full force,” after 19 soldiers were martyred in recent clashes with militants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Pakistani forces engaged militants in multiple operations across South Waziristan, Bajaur, and Lower Dir from September 10 to 13, killing at least 35 TTP fighters described as “*khawarij* belonging to Indian proxy Fitna al-Khawarij.” In Bajaur, security forces launched an intelligence-based operation, killing 22 militants and recovering weapons and ammunition. In South Waziristan, 13 more militants were neutralised, though 12 Pakistani soldiers embraced martyrdom during intense fighting. Another encounter in Lower Dir left seven more soldiers martyred and 10 militants dead. ISPR said the slain militants were actively involved in terrorist attacks across the province and reiterated that intelligence reports confirm Afghan nationals’ involvement in these operations. It further stressed that the use of Afghan soil against Pakistan by such groups remains a “grave point of concern.” Prime Minister Shehbaz and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir visited Bannu following the clashes, where they attended the funeral prayers of fallen soldiers, visited the injured at Combined Military Hospital, and received a briefing on the security situation from the Peshawar Corps Commander. Pakistan has told the Afghan interim government to “choose between supporting the *khawarij* or standing with Pakistan.”

c. Pakistan’s Special Envoy Expected in Kabul for Talks on TTP Safe Haven Concerns (Ariana News, September 14; Tolo News, September 14)

Pakistan's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Ambassador Mohammad Sadiq Khan, is expected to visit Kabul early next week for talks with officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, with security concerns at the top of the agenda. According to Pakistani media, Sadiq Khan—serving as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister with the status of Minister of State—will deliver a stern message to Kabul regarding Islamabad's concerns over the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Reports claim Pakistan will press Afghan authorities to halt the alleged facilitation of the TTP and dismantle what it describes as safe havens on Afghan soil.

The anticipated visit has drawn mixed reactions from Afghan analysts. Omid Safi, a political analyst, argued that “Pakistan has always shifted its problems onto others. The issue of the Pakistani Taliban is Pakistan's internal matter, not Afghanistan's.” Others suggested Afghanistan should adopt a more strategic approach, stating that Afghanistan must equip itself with strong reasoning to respond to accusations, provide justification, and ensure regional security, because neighbouring countries and major powers direct their accusations toward Afghanistan, not Pakistan. International relations expert Najib-ur-Rahman Shamal added that unless Pakistan acts “with honesty and sincerity” against terrorism within its own territory, visits of this nature will yield little progress. So far, Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has neither confirmed nor denied the visit.

d. Pakistan Launches New Border Strategy to Counter TTP in Khyber and Bajaur (Khaama Press, September 15)

Pakistan's security forces have rolled out a new border security strategy in Khyber and Bajaur, intensifying patrols and intelligence operations to disrupt militant supply lines from Afghanistan. The move follows fierce clashes near the frontier in which 19 Pakistani soldiers and 45 TTP militants were killed, underlining the rising intensity of counterinsurgency operations and the heavy toll on both sides. The new plan focuses on targeted intelligence-based operations, tighter patrols at sensitive crossing points, and measures to confine militants to their current positions along the frontier. Officials say the strategy specifically targets the TTP, which they claim continues to operate from sanctuaries inside Afghanistan, intending to cut off its flow of arms, funding, and manpower. Authorities added that the next six months, from September to February, provide the most favourable window for enforcement, as winter conditions often push fighters back into Afghan sanctuaries or into remote border areas to regroup. Security planners see this seasonal shift as an opportunity to disrupt logistical networks and degrade militant capacity.

6. Turkish Ambassador Highlights Continued Engagement and Economic Cooperation with Afghanistan (Tolo News, September 10)

Turkey has reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining diplomatic and economic ties with Afghanistan, with Turkish Ambassador Cenk Ünal stressing that Ankara never closed its embassy after the Taliban's return to power in 2021 and continues to pursue "constructive and quality engagement". Speaking to TOLONews, Ünal emphasised that relations between Afghanistan and Turkey are rooted in deep historical ties, describing the partnership as one of "friendship and brotherhood." He said that strengthening these ties is a priority for Ankara during the current period. The ambassador noted that Turkey is particularly focused on expanding economic and trade cooperation, pointing out that an increasing number of Turkish businessmen have been travelling to Afghanistan.

Analysts argue that closer ties between Kabul and Ankara could yield significant benefits, highlighting Turkey's unique position as a NATO member straddling Europe and Asia, making it a strategically valuable partner. Economic expert Abdul Zuhor Mudaber added that Turkey could serve as a vital transit hub for Afghan exports to Europe, enhancing Afghanistan's access to global markets. The continuation of Turkish engagement, despite widespread diplomatic disengagement following 2021, underscores Ankara's ambition to remain a key partner for Afghanistan in both the economic and political arenas, while contributing to broader regional stability.

7. US Delegation Meets Taliban Officials in Kabul, Focus on Prisoners and Future Dialogue (Al Jazeera, September 13; Amu TV, September 13)

A high-level US delegation, led by Adam Bohler, Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, and accompanied by former envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, held talks in Kabul with Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Taliban's acting foreign minister. The discussions centred on the status of American and Afghan prisoners, while also touching on investment prospects and cooperation in Afghanistan's economic and humanitarian sectors. Bohler conveyed US condolences over the recent earthquake in eastern Afghanistan and described his visit as constructive, stressing

the need to build on earlier rounds of engagement. Muttaqi framed the talks as an opportunity to normalise relations, recalling earlier dialogue in Doha and asserting that no complex issues existed that could not be resolved. At the conclusion of the meeting, both sides agreed to continue dialogue, particularly on the sensitive issue of prisoners held in each other's countries.

While the meeting signals Washington's continued willingness to engage, critics highlight that Afghans remain excluded from such high-level negotiations, even as they endure poverty, repression, and economic hardship under Taliban rule. Analysts caution that unless talks translate into tangible progress on aid, stability, rights, and lifting restrictions, dialogue risks becoming symbolic, offering promises rather than real relief for ordinary Afghans.

8. Afghanistan Launches Toti-Maidan Gas Extraction Project with Uzbekistan in Jawzjan (Tolo News, September 14; Xinhua News, September 14)

Afghanistan has officially launched the long-awaited Toti-Maidan gas exploration and extraction project in Jawzjan province, marking one of the country's most significant energy ventures in recent years.



Source: [Afghanistan Times/X, September 15](#)

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum confirmed that the contract has been signed with KAM Group and Uzbekistan's Railcom for a 25-year term. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, said the project demonstrates that "Afghanistan is ready for investment." He added that the initiative would reduce the country's dependence on imported gas and electricity, curb foreign currency outflows, and eventually pave the way for gas exports. The Minister of Mines and Petroleum, Hedayatullah Badri, highlighted that recent bilateral agreements with Uzbekistan had opened a new chapter in economic relations. The Special Envoy of the President of Uzbekistan, present at the ceremony, reaffirmed Tashkent's support for Afghanistan's major economic projects.

Uzbek Deputy Minister of Energy Bakhtiyar Mohammad Karimov added that "advanced technologies and environmental considerations" would be applied to ensure international standards. Representatives of the contracting firms also pledged timely and quality implementation. Mohammad Gul Khelmi, Senior Advisor to KAM Group, described the initiative as the outcome of a 25-year partnership between Afghan and Uzbek companies. The Toti-Maidan gas fields in Jawzjan cover 7,500 square kilometres, with nearly 30 wells already in place. Officials said the project's success could not only strengthen Afghanistan's energy independence but also transform it into a regional gas supplier.

9. Iranian Trade Delegation Visits Kabul to Boost Economic Cooperation ([Ariana News, September 15](#); [Khaama Press, September 15](#))

An Iranian economic and trade delegation, led by Industry, Mine and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak, arrived in Kabul for high-level talks aimed at strengthening bilateral economic ties. According to Afghanistan's Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the visit will focus on identifying barriers to trade, improving transit routes, and exploring joint investment opportunities. The delegation is scheduled to meet senior Afghan officials from the ministries of industry, commerce, mines, petroleum, and public works, as well as private sector representatives. As part of the trip, the delegation will also tour the Herat-Islam Qala railway, mining sites, and border facilities to assess infrastructure potential and opportunities for cooperation. Iranian media highlighted that discussions will particularly centre on

Afghanistan's vast mineral wealth, with a focus on extraction and development prospects. The visit comes, however, against the backdrop of Iran's accelerated deportations of Afghan refugees, a policy that has drawn widespread criticism from humanitarian organisations. Rights advocates warn that the forced return of vulnerable families to a country facing poverty, food insecurity, and conflict stands in sharp contrast to Tehran's pursuit of Afghanistan's economic resources. Analysts argue that while Iran seeks to expand its economic footprint in Afghanistan, its contradictory refugee policy risks fuelling resentment and undermining goodwill at a time when Kabul remains heavily dependent on regional partners for trade and investment.



AFGHANISTAN'S RETURNEE CRISIS

1. Germany to Complete Afghan Refugee Resettlement by End-2025 as UK Restricts Family Reunion Applications (BBC, September 01; Tolo News, September 03; Safir TV Afghanistan, September 04; Migration Observatory UK, September 09)

Germany has announced that the resettlement of Afghan refugees with confirmed admission will be completed by the end of 2025, while the United Kingdom has sparked controversy by suspending new family reunion applications for asylum seekers until April 2026. German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul confirmed that 2,100 Afghans in Pakistan and 200 in Afghanistan with official admission letters will be relocated by year's end. He stressed that Germany remains committed to supporting those who cooperated with German institutions, though he acknowledged that ongoing security vetting has slowed the process.

Meanwhile, the UK Home Office has temporarily suspended new family reunion applications for refugees, citing the need to reform the system. Previously, refugees granted asylum could bring spouses and children under 18 without financial or language requirements. Under the new rules, families must meet general immigration criteria, including a minimum income of £29,000 and proof of adequate housing.

Human rights groups have condemned the UK's move as "inhumane." Advocates fear the suspension will drive desperate families into the hands of human traffickers, increasing irregular migration across the English Channel. The contrasting approaches highlight Europe's divided refugee policy landscape: Germany advancing resettlement for Afghans despite bureaucratic delays, while the UK tightens family reunification pathways, raising concerns over humanitarian commitments.

2. Updates with Pakistan

a. Pakistan Launches Mass Detentions of Afghan Migrants as Residency Permits Expire (Khaama Press, September 03; News on Air, September 03)

Pakistan has begun large-scale detentions of Afghan migrants following the expiration of residency permits, targeting more than 1.4 million Afghans in the country. The Ministry of Interior has directed police and law enforcement agencies to carry out daily arrests and provide regular progress reports. Search operations are underway in major cities, including Rawalpindi, where local police confirmed that several Afghan nationals have already been detained. Officials added that, alongside holders of expired Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, nearly 8,00,000 Afghans with “citizenship cards” are also deemed illegal residents and face deportation. The crackdown has intensified congestion at border crossings, particularly at Torkham, where thousands of Afghans scrambled to leave the country before arrests. Reports from the frontier describe chaotic conditions, with long queues and families stranded without adequate shelter or resources. Aid groups fear that returning Afghans will face severe economic hardship, social instability, and exploitation, especially given Afghanistan’s ongoing poverty and security crisis. Despite these concerns, Pakistani officials insist the repatriation plan will move forward. Islamabad argues that hosting millions of Afghans has strained its economy and security, and that legal avenues remain open for those seeking to re-enter under valid visas.

b. Pakistan Rejects UN Calls to Halt Afghan Refugee Deportations (Khaama Press, September 06)

Pakistan has rejected urgent appeals from the United Nations to suspend the deportation of Afghan refugees, reaffirming its decision to enforce the repatriation plan despite growing humanitarian concerns in the wake of Afghanistan’s deadly Kunar earthquake. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan told reporters that the government’s policy remains unchanged and there will be “no suspension” of deportations. His remarks came after UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi urged Islamabad to halt expulsions, warning that the quake had displaced thousands in Afghanistan. Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, also appealed for a pause, citing severe risks for vulnerable families. Pakistan, however, stressed that while deportations of undocumented Afghans will continue, the country maintains a “liberal visa policy” for those entering through legal channels. Authorities had set September 01 as the deadline for the voluntary departure of undocumented migrants and those whose temporary permits had expired. Human rights groups and refugee advocates warn that Islamabad’s refusal to heed UN appeals could not only worsen the plight of Afghan refugees but also strain Pakistan’s international relations, as deportations proceed amid Afghanistan’s overlapping crises of poverty, displacement, and natural disasters.

3. Afghan Christian Refugees in US Face Deportation Risk After Protections Rolled Back (Khaama Press, September 05)

Advocacy groups have raised alarm over the fate of Afghan Christian refugees in the United States, warning that recent policy changes could expose them to persecution or even death if deported back to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. The US-based International Christian Concern (ICC) reported that several Afghan Christian refugees have already received formal deportation notices, placing them at immediate risk. ICC stressed that Afghan converts are among the most vulnerable groups, as Taliban authorities consider conversion from Islam to Christianity as apostasy, punishable by death. The concern follows the Department of Homeland Security's decision to rescind Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Afghanistan, which had shielded thousands of refugees from deportation. With TPS withdrawn, refugees have been advised to seek standard immigration channels—a lengthy process offering no assurance of safety. The rollback has left Afghan families in states like Kentucky and Virginia in limbo. Once protected under TPS, many now face an uncertain future as local resettlement programs lose support. Families worry about children unable to pursue education in Afghanistan and about life under strict Taliban restrictions. ICC warned that unless urgent measures such as reinstating TPS or humanitarian parole are adopted, Afghan Christian refugees remain at risk of being forcibly returned to a regime that targets them for their faith.

4. Iranian Border Guards Kill Six Afghan Migrants in Sistan-Baluchestan (Iran International, September 09; Khaama Press, September 09)

Human rights group Haal-Wash has reported that Iranian border guards opened fire on a group of Afghan migrants in Sistan-Baluchestan, killing six people, injuring five others, and detaining around forty. The incident has sparked renewed concerns over systematic rights abuses against Afghan refugees. According to the report, nearly 120 Afghan migrants, including women and children, were attempting to cross the border when Iranian forces allegedly fired without warning. Witnesses claimed that heavy firearms were used, and the shooting began abruptly. The injured were transferred to Saravan Hospital, where three remain in critical condition. Haal-Wash further stated that the bodies of those killed were left at the site of the incident.

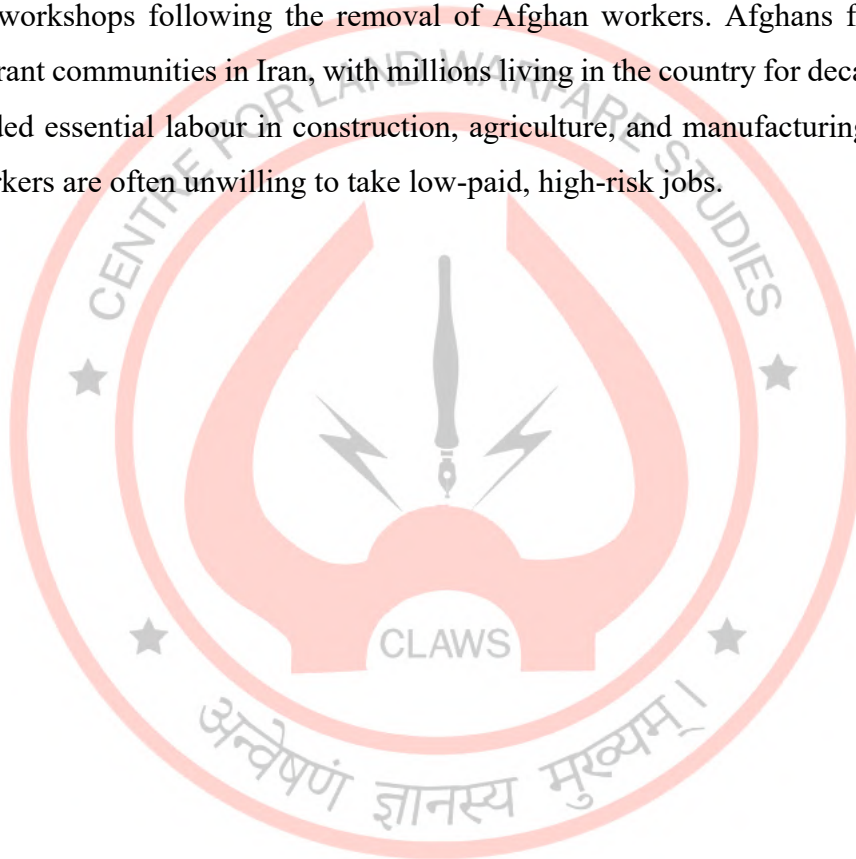
Neither Iranian officials nor the Taliban authorities in Kabul have issued any statement, continuing a pattern of silence that has drawn sharp criticism. The latest killings highlight the precarious plight of Afghan migrants, who continue to face violence, detention, and abuse at border crossings. Rights advocates argue that such actions, carried out against unarmed civilians, violate international humanitarian norms and underscore the urgent need for an independent investigation.

5. IOM Warns of Triple Crisis in Afghanistan Amid Mass Returns and Shrinking Aid (Hasht-E-Subh Daily, September 15)

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has warned that Afghanistan is facing a triple crisis of mass migrant returns, dwindling international aid, and devastating natural disasters, leaving millions at risk of poverty and displacement. According to the IOM, nearly two million Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan this year, many through forced deportations. On average, around 40,000 people are crossing back into Afghanistan daily, with many arriving homeless, jobless, and stripped of essential documents at border points. The agency stressed that women are among the most vulnerable, as many who previously studied or worked in Iran now face Taliban restrictions on education and employment. The crisis has been compounded by the Taliban's decision to bar Afghan female UN staff from offices in Kabul, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif, further limiting humanitarian access. The humanitarian burden has been worsened by natural disasters, including a series of earthquakes in eastern Afghanistan that killed more than 2,200 people, exacerbating already dire conditions. With foreign funding sharply reduced, the IOM said it has been forced to scale back assistance programmes for returnees and other at-risk groups. Afghanistan is now grappling with overlapping emergencies—mass returns, shrinking aid, and natural calamities—that together threaten to push millions deeper into poverty. The UN has appealed for nearly \$140 million in emergency funding to support around half a million of the most vulnerable, but aid shortfalls remain critical.

6. Tehran Announces Second Phase of Afghan Migrant Deportations (Khaama Press, September 15)

Tehran's governor, Mohammad Sadegh Motamadian, has announced that Iran will soon begin a second phase of deportations of Afghan migrants, framing the policy as delivering social and economic benefits despite growing humanitarian concerns. Speaking during a visit to Pishva district, Motamadian claimed that recent expulsions had reduced crime rates, cut flour consumption by 5,000 tons, and eased pressure on bakeries. He further stated that deportations had freed up more than 3,000 classrooms in Tehran province, reduced student overcrowding, and opened job opportunities for Iranian citizens. State-linked media amplified these claims, portraying the policy as a corrective measure to relieve domestic pressure. However, several local outlets reported the opposite effect, pointing to labour shortages in factories and the closure of workshops following the removal of Afghan workers. Afghans form one of the largest migrant communities in Iran, with millions living in the country for decades. They have long provided essential labour in construction, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors where Iranian workers are often unwilling to take low-paid, high-risk jobs.



About the Author

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