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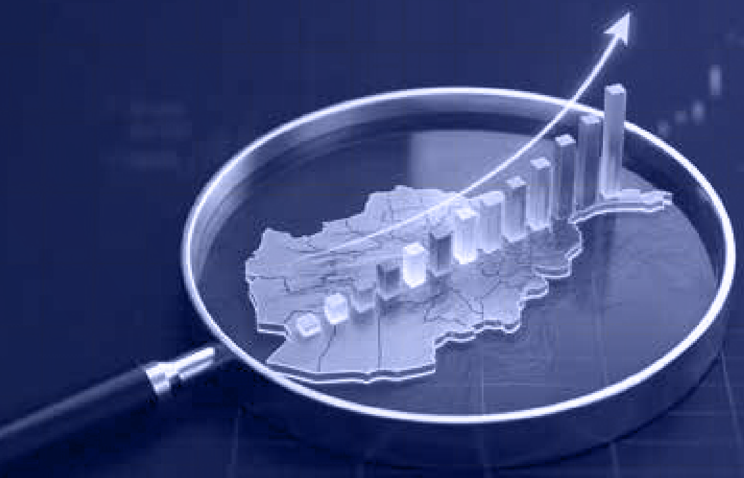

Each week, significant economic activities and developments occur across various sectors in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan's Economic Development Newsletter covers these important and latest economic activities and advancements.

In this issue:

CALLING FOR NEW FACILITIES TO EXPAND AFGHAN EXPORTS THROUGH UZBEKISTAN

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen economic cooperation between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, facilitating Afghan exports to the markets of Central Asia, Russia, and China via Uzbekistan has become a key pillar of the two countries' economic partnership. During a meeting with Uzbekistan's Deputy PM, Jamshid Khodjaev, the Deputy PM for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, emphasized the importance of removing existing barriers to the transportation of export goods. He noted that eliminating obstacles to trade would increase Afghanistan's export volume and enable the country's production sector to gain greater access to regional markets. Afghanistan possesses significant production and export potential in agricultural products, fresh and dried fruits, food products, and valuable mineral resources. Establishing additional trade and transit facilities by Uzbekistan would provide Afghan traders with improved access to Central Asian markets and enhance the competitiveness of Afghan exports. Expanding exports requires more than access to markets alone. Increasing the capacity of transit infrastructure, simplifying customs procedures, and removing obstacles to the movement of export vehicles are also essential. Expanding Afghanistan's export corridors to regional markets through Uzbekistan carries substantial economic value. According to the Deputy PM for Economic Affairs, broader economic relations between Kabul and Tashkent will not only strengthen bilateral trade but also position Afghanistan as a key commercial and transit corridor linking Central Asia with other regional markets. During the meeting, Jamshid Khodjaev added that Uzbek authorities would work jointly with the relevant institutions of the Islamic Emirate to enhance cooperation in transport and energy, agricultural development, banking, trade, and broader economic relations. He also stated that cooperation would extend to capacity-building initiatives for Afghans across various sectors.

EXPANDING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: A KEY DRIVER OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

The development of Afghanistan's telecommunications and technology sector has the potential to serve as a major catalyst for economic growth, the expansion of private sector activities, and the creation of employment opportunities. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the First Telecommunications and Technology Exhibition in Kabul, the Deputy PM for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, stressed that Afghanistan should gradually align itself with regional and global technological advancements by making effective use of its existing capabilities. The economic significance of technology extends well beyond the expansion of telecommunications services. It also creates opportunities to improve productivity, trade, and service delivery across various sectors of the economy. Digital systems can accelerate administrative processes, reduce time and operational costs, improve revenue management, and minimize human error in both government and private sector operations. Afghanistan's geographical location also provides a unique economic advantage in this field. As a strategic link between South and Central Asia, Afghanistan can play an important role in data transit. By expanding digital infrastructure, improving internet network quality, and strengthening information technology services, the country can benefit from regional and global digital economic flows. The development of technology also creates new opportunities for employment and innovation, particularly for young people. According to the Deputy PM for Economic Affairs, development projects across various sectors and tax incentives aimed at facilitating private sector activities have already been introduced to reduce unemployment. However, increased investment in the technology sector can complement these efforts by creating high-skilled, sustainable employment opportunities.