

Afghanistan: Jun/Jul '11 Part I

Author: [Shahpoor Saber](#)

IWPR report on dire consequences of cheap imports for Herat factories triggers further press coverage.

A flurry of local, national and international and local media reports about the apparently ruinous impact of cut-price foreign imports on Herat businesses is said to have been prompted by an IWPR article on the subject.

The report, **Foreign Imports Killing Off Afghan Industry**, focused on problems faced by factory owners in Herat who said they were being forced out of business by flawed government policies that allowed foreign goods to flood into the country.

The IWPR story reported how 130 out of 300 small factories established in the industrial park in 2005 had to close, with many others struggling to keep going.

Local businessmen complained that the government had increased taxes on local products while keeping down the level of import tariffs on foreign products, mainly from Iran.

Hamidullah Khadem, director of the industrialists' association in Herat province, said that local, national and international media interest in their plight had surged after the publication of the IWPR report.

"Although the problems had started growing for some factories in the Herat industrial park in late 2005, the problem was not much covered by the media," he said. "So the great interest of many media outlets who have contacted the industrialists' association office shows that the IWPR report played an invaluable role."

Khadem said that although no concrete steps had yet been taken, many high-ranking officials had visited the industrial park in the wake of the media coverage, and he hoped that this would draw serious government attention to their problems.

Media professionals in the province also spoke highly of the IWPR report, which has led to a number of radio and television follow-ups, including one from the Al-Jazeera satellite TV station.

Khalil Amiri, manager of the local Faryad radio station and director of the centre for the support of journalists in western Afghanistan, said that he had first learnt about the problems of the industrial park through the IWPR article.

"The report discussed all aspects and featured many different sources," he said. "After reading the report, Radio Faryad broadcast a 45-minute live programme, and listeners phoned in to share their opinions about the problems in the Herat industrial park."

Amiri said the IWPR story had led to a number of follow-up reports on his radio station, including interviews with factory owners and workers.

Fawad Ahmadi, a reporter in Herat province, said that IWPR had once again managed to inform the public and the government of issues of concern through its responsible reporting.

"When the IWPR report on the closure of 130 factories in the Herat industrial park was published, it sparked massive media interest in the issue," he said. "Local media outlets debated and discussed the problems in the industrial park - which shows that IWPR was effective."

Shahpoor Saber is an IWPR reporter in Herat province.

Location: [Afghanistan](#)

Topic: [Economy](#)

Source URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghanistan-junjul-11-part-i>