

Afghan Links

ISSUE – 7 – 12th March 2006 (TOTAL NO. 65)



Afghan Links is a free e-newsletter for readers who have a keen interest in Afghanistan and its history, people and culture. It invites news and articles from anyone who wishes to create and maintain constructive links between Afghanistan and other countries by sharing their expertise, information and ideas in any field.

CONTENTS home

REGULAR FEATURES – 8 PILLARS OF THE INTERIM AFGHAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (I-ANDS)

1. **SECURITY**
Afghan opium: License to kill - By Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy as published in the Asia Times [page 2](#)

Chance for a new start in Afghanistan by John Simpson [page 3](#)

Five former Afghan Jehadi commanders to surrender arms to UN-supported unit [page 4](#)
 2. **GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS**
Afghanistan politics: Problems continue for party system [page 4](#)
 3. **INFRASTRUCTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
Construction work begins on key bridge in Herat [page 5](#)
 4. **EDUCATION, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**
FOREIGN RADIO STATIONS IN KABUL ON FM [page 5](#)
 5. **HEALTH**
Report Warns Malnutrition Begins in Cradle [page 6](#)
 6. **AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**
Ninety-six Governments recognize the 'essential role' of agrarian reform and rural development in the fight against poverty [page 7](#)
 7. **SOCIAL PROTECTION**
Dwindling Industry, Growing Poverty: Urban Livelihoods in Pul-e Khumri – New AREU Report [page 8](#)
 8. **ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT**
American Logistics Afghanistan [page 8](#)

Ministry of Finance - The Introduction of a Road Toll System in Afghanistan [page 9](#)

Afghan Traders Seek Foreign Markets for Their Products [page 10](#)
-

CONTENTS CONTINUED

“Workshop on Gender and Development” – 16th April 2006

[page 10](#)

Cultural Events at the Afghan Gallery

[page 11](#)

“BUSINESS ENGLISH”

[page 11](#)

National Holidays in 2006 (1384 – 1385HS) - Prepared by ACBAR

[page 12](#)

SECURITY

Afghan opium: License to kill - By Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy as published in the Asia Times

Editor's note:One of the more controversial topics..... is how to deal with Afghanistan's opium fields, which last year produced about 4,200 tonnes of raw opium.

In June 1906, Charles Henry Brent, the first Protestant Episcopal Church bishop of the Philippines and a staunch opponent of the opium trade, wrote to president Theodore Roosevelt to ask for the United States to call an international conference to enforce anti-opium measures in China.

The conference was held in Shanghai in 1909. One hundred years after Bishop Brent's letter, the global prohibition of opium and certain other drugs has largely failed, in spite of, or maybe because of, more than 30 years of the "war on drugs" launched in 1971 by the administration of US president Richard Nixon.

This is what was stressed at a conference on "Drug Production and State Stability" recently held in Paris, when Alfred McCoy, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin and author of *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*, explained that, "after fighting five drug wars in 30 years at a cost of US\$150 billion, Washington has presided over a [fivefold] increase" in the world illicit-opium supply, from 1,000 tonnes in 1970 to between 5,000 and 6,000 tonnes in the mid-2000s.

This was exemplified in late 2005 when the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) confirmed that Afghanistan was still and by far the world's first producing country of illicit opium, despite alternative development efforts, eradication measures, and widely lauded achievements in democracy and state-building in the country.

Clearly, as has now been stated by many observers and analysts, the danger for Afghanistan is that a hastened suppression or eradication program will, in the absence of alternative livelihoods being widely promoted, damage the fragile rural economy, prove counterproductive in the mid-term, and impede sustainable solutions to the Afghan crisis.

Indeed, in a 2004 interview, Doris Buddenberg, the head of UNODC in Afghanistan, said, "Eradication usually does not bring about a sustainable reduction of poppy crop - it is a one-time, short-term effort. Also eradication usually pushes the prices up. As we have seen from the Taliban period, the one-year ban on opium-poppy cultivation increased prices enormously the following year and it became extremely attractive for farmers to cultivate poppy."

However, in December 2005, only a few weeks after having lauded "the largest decrease [of opium-poppy cultivation] ever recorded in a single year in any country", Buddenberg said there were "signs cultivation may increase next year in many areas, in part because of pressure on farmers to grow opium poppies and their own concerns about making a living", thus without clearly acknowledging that the so-called "success" in reducing opium-poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in 2004-05 had already been and was still to be largely counterproductive.

In such a context, where both interdiction and development have failed to solve the "opium problem" in Afghanistan, because interdiction without development amounts to further deteriorating the livelihoods of opium farmers, and alternative development is far from having been implemented with adequate economic means and political determination, a rather new, but unrealistic, proposal has emerged: the licensing of Afghan opium for production of pharmaceutical morphine.

Described as "a truly winning solution" by many, the proposal of the Senlis Council, an

"international drug-policy think-tank" based in Paris, consists of licensing Afghan opium for the production of legal medicines such as morphine and codeine as a way to respond to the urgent need to significantly reduce Afghanistan's illegal opium production and trade, but also as a way to overcome the "significant global shortage of opium-based medicines such as morphine and codeine", a problem "felt most acutely in the developing world".

This proposal, however, is based on false or inexact premises, on at least two levels: regarding the world market on the one hand, and national and local opium-farming communities on the other hand. **Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy** is a geographer and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique research fellow, and produces www.geopium.org

See Reference 7_E for the full article and another publication on narcotics - Afghanistan's Opium Production in Perspective – 7_D. [home](#)

Chance for a new start in Afghanistan by John Simpson

Afghanistan is not Iraq. It should not be necessary to make the point, of course.

But after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein there is a growing resistance in the West to further adventures.

In the minds of many people in Europe, sending more troops to Afghanistan is both dangerous and imperialistic.

It does not necessarily have to be either.

The motives that have led Britain, Canada, France, Germany and other countries to send their soldiers to Afghanistan are very different from those which led the United States and Britain to invade Iraq three years ago.

Mutual interest

And the response by most Afghans to the presence of foreign troops in their country is nothing like the hatred and anger which so many Iraqis feel towards the Americans and British.

In Afghanistan, the self-interest of Western countries happens to coincide with that of the Afghan people. We need a peaceful, prosperous and well-governed Afghanistan.

When it is none of these things, it can do us immense damage. The attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States were planned and organised in Taleban-ruled Afghanistan.

The great majority of the heroin that reaches the streets of Western cities comes from the wilder parts of Afghanistan.

Help the Afghan government grow strong, support the living standards of the Afghan people, and we ourselves will be safer.

The trouble is, the West has never seen Afghanistan as a real country. It has always seen it, instead, as a square on the international chess-board.

The overthrow of the Taleban was a triumph of minimalism

In the 1980s, when Ronald Reagan was president of the United States and Margaret Thatcher was the British prime minister, we heard a great deal about the sufferings of the Afghans under the Soviet yoke.

But when the Russians withdrew from Afghanistan in February 1989, the Americans, the British and everyone else lost all interest in the country. Now it was just an extremely poor country with no natural resources.

Taleban loathed

In the 1990s, ignored by the outside world, Afghanistan descended into a spiral of insane violence which ended only with the arrival in power of the most perverse and retrograde government in modern times: the Taleban.

The overthrow of the Taleban in November 2001 was a triumph of minimalism. A small number of US special forces and a certain amount of bombing helped the anti-Taleban Northern Alliance to chase them out of Kabul.

Public opinion in the United States still favours the use of force rather than reason

The Taleban had been loathed by most Afghans, and their departure was greeted like a new dawn. Britain and America promised they would not lose interest in Afghanistan again.

Then came the invasion of Iraq. All the attention was redirected there. As the resistance movement blossomed and spread in Iraq, its influence spread back into Afghanistan.

The Taleban, which had seemed to be finished, began to grow in influence again. It imported the tactics of the Iraqi insurgents and became a training-ground for Islamic militants again.

New start

Anyone who knows Afghanistan knows how ordinary people there long for peace and prosperity. The author and commentator Ahmed Rashid writes: "Western forces are still welcome - as long as they are really useful and are willing to both fight and help in reconstruction."

Even the south-east, where the Taleban always had greater support, and where British troops are now going to be based, is less dangerous than Iraq.

They can do a great deal more good in Afghanistan - especially if they learn from their Iraqi mistakes.

The key is to act as partners in Afghanistan, not as occupiers.

One of the most thoughtful American commentators on Afghanistan, Vanni Cappelli, argues cogently that the Western forces need to work with the tribes along the wild borderlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan, where Osama Bin Laden and the Taleban leaders are being sheltered. Last month the CIA launched a missile attack across the border, killing 18 civilians.

This kind of action against the tribes will not, Cappelli argues, "sway this warrior people if it feels it can uphold its honour and dignity by supporting Islamic extremists. The trick is proving to them that there are better ways to secure these things."

Cappelli is entirely right. If the trick can be performed, Afghanistan will be a safer, better, more prosperous country.

The trouble is, public opinion in the United States still favours the use of force rather than reason. Although he is a well-regarded authority, Cappelli's eminently sensible article was rejected by 24 American newspapers before finding a home in US Italia.

There is a brief opportunity for a new start in Afghanistan. The Americans could rethink their whole approach; the British could restore their reputation, so battered in Iraq, and other Nato countries could show they can be something more than merely critics on the sidelines.

Let us hope they get it right for a change.

Source: John Simpson - BBC NEWS - 20th February 2006

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/4732258.stm

[home](#)

Five former Afghan Jehadi commanders to surrender arms to UN-supported unit

Five former Jehadi commanders in Afghanistan are expected to surrender 15 tons of ammunition as well as over 30 light and heavy weapons to the Government weapons programme supported by the United Nations, that programme announced today.

The weapons, from the southwestern Paktya province, are being surrendered under the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) programme in association with the provincial Governor.

According to the DIAG announcement, they will be transferred to a central weapons collection point where they will be under the surveillance of the Afghan National Army (ANA). They will be either used by the security forces or destroyed if not serviceable.

The DIAG process, launched in June 2005 as the second phase in the demobilization and disarmament process, has so far collected 17,655 weapons as well as 25,760 pieces of boxed and 72,253 pieces of unboxed ammunition.

Of those weapons, 4,857 have been handed over by 124 candidates to the parliamentary and provincial council elections, the programme said.

Source: UN News Service – 20th February 2006.

[home](#)

GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Afghanistan politics: Problems continue for party system

Afghanistan's fledgling party system remains fragmented, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the new parliament, which began work last December following a general election in September. There are concerns about the allocation of parliamentary seats on the basis of patchy population data, and also about the high number of legislators with links to former mujahideen (fighters against occupation by the Soviet Union in the 1980s). The president, Hamid Karzai, might find it difficult to win sufficient backing from the various factions within parliament unless he adopts a more conciliatory style of government. And unless the new legislature can make progress on key issues such as corruption, unemployment and government accountability, the electorate could quickly become cynical and disgruntled.

At the start of 2006, there were 80 licensed political parties. This number includes two licensed at the start of the year, and more have requested approval. An official at the Ministry of Justice, Abdol Ghayas Ilyasi, has said that about 30% of licensed parties are affiliated to former mujahideen. Some unofficial sources have argued that up to 60% of members of parliament have

mujahideen links. Many of these stand accused of war crimes or human rights abuses, and there is still a high degree of unease among the public at the presence of so many of these men in the legislature.

Although the general election was held in September last year, the electoral process was not formally completed until November 30th, owing to numerous complaints about the handling of the poll, often from failed candidates. Other more general criticisms centred on the number of MPs returned by each region, and the number of votes cast. Parliamentary seats were supposed to have been allocated so that each part of the country was represented in proportion to its population--a difficult task in Afghanistan, where population data are scanty. Some alleged that the southern provinces appeared to have a larger number of MPs than their populations merited, and there were questions over the number of votes cast in southern provinces during the election, which looked unexpectedly large.

The new parliament is relatively powerful. Mr Karzai cannot dissolve it, and the body must authorise the cabinet and some senior officials through votes. For Mr Karzai, obtaining this endorsement may prove difficult, as no single party dominates in parliament. Many have perceived the president's previous style of government as direct; in order to win the backing of factions within parliament he may in future have to be more conciliatory, bringing in more politicians from rival factions and various ethnic groups.

Mr Karzai has also held an "Accountability Week", during which various ministers were paraded before the public and questioned about policy. However, there are clearly limits as to how accountable ministers are. In December the president asked prosecutors to step back from an investigation into the transport minister, Enayatollah Qasemi. The minister was suspected of having two passports with different details, and had not replied to letters sent by the prosecutor's department.

The election of a new parliament has raised popular expectations concerning reform and economic improvement that will be hard to fulfil. It is clear that underlying problems such as corruption, unemployment and government accountability have yet to be substantially resolved. If the legislature cannot make headway on these issues, the electorate's attitude could quickly become cynical and disgruntled. **Source:** EU Press – 19th February -circulated on Moby Capital Update 20th February 2006. [home](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Construction work begins on key bridge in Herat

Construction work on a half-kilometre bridge on the Harirood River started on Thursday to facilitate the huge traffic of the four districts of the Western Herat province and Kandahar-Herat Highway to the central capital.

Provincial head of the Public Works Department Habibullah Timori told Pajhwok Afghan News the project was started with US fund to reduce the traffic load on the bridge that was linking Shindand, Adraskan, Guzra and Pashtun Zarghun districts.

The length of the bridge was 409-metres while its width was seven metres that was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), he added.

Source: Ahmad Qureshi - HERAT CITY, Mar 9 (Pajhwok Afghan News): circulated on Afghan News – 10th March 2006. [home](#)

EDUCATION, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

FOREIGN RADIO STATIONS IN KABUL ON FM

- ❖ 101.6 BBC WORLD SERVICE in English
- ❖ 102.4 BFBS 1
- ❖ 104.9 BFBS 2
- ❖ 89.5 RFI
- ❖ 105.7 US FORCES AFN

[home](#)

HEALTH

Report Warns Malnutrition Begins in Cradle

Nutrition education programs for parents would do a better job than large and politically popular feeding programs in fighting the rampant malnutrition that is stunting the development of more than 100 million children worldwide, a new World Bank report says, finding that a lack of food is usually not the main cause of child malnutrition.

Children are irreversibly damaged by malnutrition by age 2, long before they begin primary school. The World Bank report contends that aid efforts must concentrate on the brief window of opportunity before that age. And in areas not hit by famine or other crises, the report says, efforts must focus more on teaching mothers to properly feed and care for babies and toddlers than on school meal programs. While experts interviewed yesterday generally agreed with the bank's assessment of the evidence on malnutrition, some of them argued that feeding programs did have an important role to play in improving the nutrition of children.

The debate about how to tackle the problem is an important one at a time when the world is pushing to reduce child mortality by two-thirds over the coming decade. Malnutrition is implicated in more than half of the deaths of children globally, "a proportion unmatched by an infectious disease since the Black Death," the bank's report says. The World Bank, as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is popularly known, is the largest financier of antipoverty programs in developing countries. Its report, titled **"Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development,"** maintains that countries like India with staggering rates of malnutrition need to change their approach to speed up progress. Outside of regions in crises, nutritionists at the bank say, programs should shift their emphasis from directly providing food to changing the behaviors of mothers — for example, to breast-feed exclusively for the first six months of life or seek quick treatment for their children's diarrhea. Improvements to sanitation and health care are also needed.

The origins of malnutrition often lie in the way infants and young children are fed, not the quantity of food available. In many societies in Africa and South Asia, the first days of thick, yellowish breast milk, called colostrum, are discarded, though it contains antimicrobials that can protect children against infection. It is then replaced with local concoctions that all too often include bad water that can give children diarrhea. For school-age children, nutrition education, iron supplements and deworming medicines are usually better investments for improving nutrition than providing meals, the report says. It acknowledges that feeding programs increase school attendance, but emphasizes that they should not come at the expense of efforts to reach preschool children. "You get more bang for your buck without the food," said Meera Shekar, the lead author of the report, who described feeding programs as costly and vulnerable to corruption. "The food brings in votes for politicians. We have very little evidence it improves nutrition."

Advocates of feeding programs reply that food can be a magnet that draws mothers and children to centers where nutrition counseling is offered — and that food itself can provide pregnant women and children under 2 with a richer, more varied diet, while attracting older children to school and helping them concentrate on learning. "If you feed the children well, they'll all be there," said Jean Dreze, an economist and leading advocate of free lunch programs in India, which now serve more than 100 million primary-school students. "The response to food is phenomenal." Some of the facts about malnutrition, familiar to experts but not widely understood, seem counterintuitive. For example, rates of malnutrition in South Asia, including India, Bangladesh and Nepal, are nearly double those in sub-Saharan Africa, which is much poorer. India's programs to feed children in school have multiplied in recent years, but its nutrition program for preschool children mainly assists those between the ages of 3 to 6 — too late to prevent the stunting and damage to intellect that occur by age 2, bank nutritionists and other experts say. A spokesman for the Indian Embassy in Washington said yesterday that he had not yet read the report and could not comment on it.

The problem of malnutrition in India, known for its well-educated, high-tech workers, is striking. Almost half the children are stunted by malnutrition, but the problem is not limited to the poor. A quarter of the children under age 5 in the richest fifth of the population are also underweight and nearly two-thirds are anemic, the report says. "Think of the power of India if all these kids were not malnourished and could participate fully," Ms. Shekar said. Nutritionists say the implications of the large body of research that informs the bank's report is clear: countries must intervene before children turn 2. "If you miss that period, the damage is irreversible, especially in cognition, but also in growth," said Marie Ruel, director of the division of food consumption and nutrition at the International Food Policy Research Institute. Ask for Reference 7_F or go to <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NUTRITION/Resources/2818461131636806329/NutritionStrategy.pdf>

Source: By Celia W. Dugger — New York Times — 3rd March 2006.

[home](#)

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Ninety-six Governments recognize the 'essential role' of agrarian reform and rural development in the fight against poverty

Representatives of 96 member countries of FAO participating in the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) which concluded today [10th March] in Porto Alegre recognized “the essential role of agrarian reform and rural development to promote sustainable development” of the planet. A declaration was released at the end of the conference, which brought together 350 government delegations and representatives of over 70 farmer and civil society organizations from throughout the world.

During four days of work, high-level government representatives, international experts and civil society representatives worked together to identify new opportunities for rural development and to make concrete recommendations and proposals for action.

In his message to the closing ceremony, FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf stressed some of the main proposals and results of the Conference. “When FAO agreed to organize this Conference, we were under no illusion that dialogue would be easy on a subject such as agrarian reform. However, one of the great results of this Conference has been the level of dialogue reached between government representatives and members of peasants’ and civil society organizations, laid out in a common vision about the importance of introducing urgent and needed changes to eradicate hunger and poverty.”

Diouf emphasized concrete results reached in the field of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, such as the agreement signed yesterday between FAO and Portuguese speaking countries to promote capacity building on property regimes and land management and related legal issues.

In the declaration, signatory governments committed themselves to developing mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation to reinforce processes of agrarian reform and rural development at national and international levels and to establish mechanisms for periodic evaluation of progress in these areas.

Participation and the fight against poverty

Governments that signed the declaration reaffirmed that “wider, secure and sustainable access to land, water and other natural resources” on which rural people depend are “essential to hunger and poverty eradication, which contribute to sustainable development and should be an inherent part of national policies.”

They also reiterated their commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and recognized that “food insecurity, hunger and rural poverty often result from the imbalances in the present process of development which hinder wider access to land, water and other natural resources and other livelihood assets.”

To achieve these objectives, the delegates present at the conference recognized that joint action of governments, international organizations and civil society organizations are fundamental. “We emphasize that agrarian reform and rural development policies, laws and institutions must respond to the needs and aspirations of rural people, and therefore must involve relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process,” the declaration said.

Civil society representatives actively participated throughout the entire ICARRD process, and for the first time in the history of FAO’s international conferences, their representatives participated in plenary and technical sessions and the civil society declaration was included in the official documents of the conference.

In keeping with this spirit of collaboration, the declaration affirmed that governmental and civil society organizations play a fundamental role in the sustainable implementation of agrarian reform and rural development policies and recognized “the crucial role of the State to provide fair and equal opportunities and promote basic economic security for women and men, as equal citizens.”

Online news from FAO: <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/>

[home](#)

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Dwindling Industry, Growing Poverty: Urban Livelihoods in Pul-e Khumri – New AREU Report

A new case study from the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), *Dwindling Industry, Growing Poverty: Urban Livelihoods in Pul-e Khumri*, examines urban vulnerability as experienced by five communities in a central Afghan city.

Roughly 60 years ago, the opening of a government textile factory transformed this small village in Baghlan Province into a bustling urban area, attracting Afghans from around the country. But today downsizing within the textile and other industries has left many residents with restricted access to employment opportunities as well as to basic infrastructure and services.

While Pul-e Khumri shares many problems common to Afghan cities, this study found several unique characteristics of its urban settlements, including:

Communities have prioritised the creation of accessible schools in their neighbourhoods, and as a result children in poor urban households in Pul-e Khumri have higher school enrolment rates compared to those in other cities.

Pul-e Khumri residents have strong urban–rural linkages, with people travelling back and forth for work from the city to the countryside; these linkages could be better exploited to help families diversify their income sources.

The majority of those who have access to long-term factory jobs have been able to overcome conditions of poverty, and their children have attained higher education levels and been able, in some instances, to establish their own micro-enterprises.

Copies of this report are available from AREU’s office in Kabul, on the web at www.areu.org.af, or in PDF format by emailing publications@areu.org.af or ask for Reference 7_A. [home](#)

ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

American Logistics Afghanistan

ALA would like to thank you for this opportunity which allows us to introduce our Real Estate Agency and services to you, our potential client.

ALA is the best source for all your real estate needs in Kabul and throughout Afghanistan. Our aim is to provide the best professional service possible in order to meet the International communities budget requirements, guesthouse and office needs.

Types of services

The main competitive advantage of ALA and the main scope of activity will be to provide the following:

- Safe and secure locations
- Fully licensed and government registered
- Maintain the integrity of our client's rental & budget requirements
- 24-hour customer care & service
- Make appointments & view homes via E-Mail
- Lease, sell & manage your property while abroad
- Negotiation of contracts with the lease's best interest in mind
- Will provide transportation for "in the field" viewing of homes
- Results in a matter of days

- Security assessment, guesthouse and office setup, landscaping, transportation, property management, generator requirements, and force protection

Responsibilities

- Landlord is the legal property owner
- Legal documents are available for the house and property
- Legal, Binding contracts which are above the standard of

Kabul's real estate market

- Personal intervention and resolution of any situation between the home owner and lease
- Negotiation for a fair market price that will be lower than the initial asking price

See Reference 7_C for all the details.

[home](#)

Ministry of Finance - The Introduction of a Road Toll System in Afghanistan



Ministry of Finance - The Introduction of a Road Toll System in Afghanistan

Background:

Afghanistan has had a road toll system in the past.

We are re-establishing a toll system to generate sustainable revenue to maintain and extend the national road network.

The evaluation of options shows the optimal system for Afghanistan at this time is the use of colour coded permits (Decals) affixed to the windscreens of vehicles

The Decal model provides practical equity for motorists: everyone pays a modest fee for access to toll roads, with trucks and commercial vehicles paying a higher fee

The revenue collected depends on the numbers of vehicles using the toll roads

The planned start date for the Decal road toll system is early 1385

A publicity campaign will be run as part of introducing this system

The road toll system is based on a recent Asian Development Bank (ADB) study, acknowledging world best practice in toll systems and Afghan law

Objectives / Goals:

New Source of Revenue: Toll revenue is a common method of funding road systems in many countries and to reduce taxes

Stable Source of Finance: The road toll would provide an ongoing revenue source separate from the annual Government budgetary process

Dedicated Source of Finance: The funds from toll revenues can be dedicated wholly or partly to support the construction and maintenance of specific roads. Resources are able to be directed to areas of most need

To Introduce a 'User Pays' Principle: those who use the roads pay for them. A sustainable transport system is best funded by those using the system.

Road Toll Cordon Regions:

Initially the roads that will make up the Afghanistan national road toll network are:

Kabul – Spin Boldak (Kandahar)

Kabul – Gardez

Kabul – Mazur

Kabul – Jalalabad

Principles Considered:

The road toll system design should be practicable and simple

There should be minimal compliance cost to ensure the integrity of the system
 The toll costs should be kept to a minimum so that all users pay modest amounts
 All users to pay, however those vehicle types that impact on the road more would be required to pay more, eg. Trucks
 Implement the system in phases
 The system should be adaptable to future needs
 The system should be able to accommodate changes required because of experience gained, public opinion and technological improvements

Cost of Decals:

Vehicle Type:	Monthly:	Quarterly:	Annual:
<i>Passenger:</i>	200AFS	500AFS	1500AFS
<i>Light Commercial:</i>	1000AFS	2500AFS	7500AFS
<i>Heavy Commercial:</i>	5000AFS	12,500AFS	40,000AFS

[home](#)

Afghan Traders Seek Foreign Markets for Their Products

Local traders in Afghanistan's central Bamyan province Sunday demanded the newly established Chamber of Commerce and Industries Department create a market for their goods abroad.

The branch was officially launched during a ceremony attended by a large number of government officials and businessmen.

One of the local traders, Haji Fida welcomed the setting up of the new department and dubbed it as a useful step that would boost business in the region.

In a brief chat with Pajhwok Afghan News, Haji Fida said, there were about 3,000 traders and workers in this province and their long-awaited demand was the creation of markets for their goods abroad.

Citing an example of the carpet and rug industry in the province, he said they didn't have any market for these products so far and urged the newly established department to take effective steps in this regard.

Meanwhile, the Governor of Habiba Sarabi also directed the Chamber of Commerce to find foreign markets for the producers, as currently the traders had to sell them for lower prices.

Haji Chaman, a local trader, who was named as director for the newly formed department said they would try to find good markets for the produces abroad.

The department was aimed at solving the problem of the traders, he added.

Source: BAMYAN CITY - Asia Pulse – circulated by Afghan News Centre 20th February 2006.

[home](#)

“Workshop on Gender and Development” – 16th April 2006

Date: April 16,2006
 To: All Partners, NGO's and ING's
 From: CWS-P/A, Kbaul

We are pleased to inform you that Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS-P/A) is organizing a 5-days training workshop on “Gender and Development”. The workshop will be held from April 9-13, 2006 in Kabul.

CWS-P/A is now inviting applications from NGOs, CBOs, and religious bodies to participate in this workshop. The attached brochure provides detailed information about the workshop. If you wish to nominate any person(s) from your organization, kindly fill the enclosed application form. Please ensure to mail/fax back the filled form with complete information before April 9-13, 2006. If you need any further information, please feel free to contact us at our Kabul office.

Contact: - Nijabat Khan - CWS-P/A – Kabul - Cell Phone: 070274377 – **Please see Reference 7_A for the full details and a map of how to get to the office.**

[home](#)

Cultural Events at the Afghan Gallery

Afghan Gallery situated next to the Women's Ministry at Shahr e Naw is restarting the series of its weekly Cultural events on Friday evenings. The event was not taking place for three weeks for Muharram it is going to be restarted from next Friday 24th February.

The weekly traditional and classic music events are performed by professional Afghan classic musicians. The event is taking place every Friday 5:00 to 10:00 Pm. In order to cover the costs we sell tickets for the event at US\$15. which includes the cost of dinner and soft drinks as well. The Gallery also offers a fine collection of art works from Afghan Artists, professionally crafted and naturally processed variety of traditional handicrafts and gift items. The collection include paintings, silk and woolen rugs (with natural dyes and traditional designs) in small, medium and large sizes, hand stitched needle works, Nooristani carved wood works, pottery, blue glass, locally crafted small jewelry and other gift items.

Pay a visit and enjoy your time by going through a colorful range of products and a warm welcome of our staff, seven days a week 9am to 6pm.

Beside above mentioned items the gallery is offering hosting services for group gatherings, we provide food, soft drinks and space for your workshops, seminars and other gatherings, against reasonable charges at day time Saturday to Thursday. To use this service needs prior booking since already various institutions are using the facility.

The Afghan Gallery Digital phone: +93 (0) 202200101 Mobile: +93 (0) 799712442 [home](#)

“BUSINESS ENGLISH”

Do you or your colleagues need to improve skills in administrative and business English?
Silk Road English Center Kabul (IAM-EFL) is offering a new course!

A specialized 10 week course for 20 selected applicants only. (Two classes of 10 students.)

A stimulating course taught by a native English speaking teacher and business person.

A course using modern methods e.g. videos, cassettes, and extensive group interaction. A course which teaches international level English to NGO's and business people.

A course which builds confidence in communicating on a personal and group level.

TEACHER: The teacher, Margaret Forster, is a professional businessperson and English teacher. Margaret is specially coming from Australia to teach Business English. She has had wide experience in Management, Project Administration and Marketing in Australia and in England.

WHEN: There are two classes being offered with 10 students in each. One will be on Saturdays and Mondays from 3:00 -6:00. A second class will run from 3:00 to 6:00 on Sundays and Wednesdays. The course begins on Saturday, the 25th of March or Sunday the 26th. “Business English” is a total of 60 classroom hours.

WHERE: At the Silk Road English Center (run by IAM) over the road from Kabul Greens Restaurant on Kalola Pushta Road, Taimani. A certificate will be issued on completion of the course.

SOME TOPICS COVERED BY THE COURSE INCLUDE:

- § Introducing yourself
- § Using the telephone & making appointments
- § Describing your company and its product
- § Rescheduling plans and arrangements
- § Analyzing your competitors
- § Business letters and presenting information
- § Traveling on business
- § Presenting a new product & relating to donor organizations
- § Entertaining visitors
- § Comparing & Complaining about products and services
- § Negotiating prices & deliveries
- § Concluding a deal

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS: The course is for male & female Afghans who already have an advanced level of English. All candidates will be tested & interviewed and 20 will be selected for

the two classes. Commitment to regular attendance is essential. At least one hour of home study is required after each lesson. Females are encouraged to apply.

TESTING AND INTERVIEWS: All applicants will be tested and interviewed. Interested applicants must call the Silk Road Center for an appointment BEFORE the 22nd of March.

FEES: The cost will be US\$185 (Afs 9,250) This includes 60 hours tuition, photocopied handouts and the students book, "Beginning Business English."

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Silk Road EFL Phone: 0799 333633

Email: silkroadEFL@iamafg.org

[home](#)

National Holidays in 2006 (1384 – 1385HS) - Prepared by ACBAR

Occasions	Date
Arafa (Religious Day) *	Zolhajat 9 th , 1426 or 9 th of January (Monday)
Eid-ul-Adha * (Religious Day)	Zolhaja 10 th – 12 th , 1426 or 10 th -12 th January (Tuesday – Thursday)
Tenth of Mahram (Youm-e-Aashor) * (Religious Day)	10 th Mahram, 1427 or 9 th of February (Thursday)
The Solar New Year	1 st of Hamal 1385 or 21 st of March (Tuesday)
Eid-ul-Mildad-ul-Nabi or Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Birthday (Mowlod- e-Sharif) * (Religious Day)	11 th of Rabi-ul-Awal, 1427 or 10 th of April (Monday)
Celebration of Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan **	Saur 8 th , 1385 or 28 th of April (Friday)
The Independence Day of Afghanistan	28 th of Asad, 1385 or 19 th of August (Saturday)
Great Ahmad Shah Masood Day **	18 th of Sunbula, 1385 or 9 th of September (Saturday)
First day of Ramaza-ul-Mobarak * (Religious Day)	1 st of Ramazan, 1427 or 24 th of September (Sunday)
Eid-ul-Feter * (Religious Day)	1 st – 3 rd Shawal, 1427 or 24 th – 26 th of October (Tuesday – Thursday)

* *Subject to lunar phase change announced by the Government*

** *Upon announcement of the Government* www.acbar.org

[home](#)

If you want further information on any of the above subjects please email Jeanne Bryer at Afghanlinks@aol.com NB. All information contained here identifies the source and is shared with readers in good faith. If you find any incorrect details please let me know and they will be rectified immediately. Afghan Links is produced by Jeanne Bryer who also currently supports the Khorasan Orphanage see www.khorasan.org.uk If you no longer wish to receive the Afghan Links Newsletter please send an email to Jeanne Afghanlinks@aol.com and your address will be removed.