



What's On In Kabul

ISSUE 42/2007 19 February 2007

NEWS SECTION

FOUNDATION OF TOWNSHIP LAID IN KABUL

Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and Development engineer Yousaf Pashtun laid foundation of a modern residential scheme in Deh Sabz district of this capital city on Thursday. The new residential scheme will have 20,000 houses and is part of the extension plan of this central capital. The scheme named Deh Sabz is located some 25 kilometres north of Kabul. Addressing the ceremony organised in this connection, the minister said construction of the new township would be completed in the coming five years.

Homeless people, living in Kabul, would get houses in the new scheme, said the minister. He added prices of the houses would range from 18,000 to and 20,000 US dollars and the owners would return the amount in 15 to 20 years in installments ranging from 100 to 150 USD per month. He hoped construction of the new township would solve residential problems up to a large extent in the capital. He said contract of the construction work had been awarded to a private company in the name of Korea - Afghan Construction Company. This was the first residential scheme of its kind in the central capital Kabul, said the minister, who added more such schemes would be launched in the future.

AFGHAN AND JAPAN SIGNED AGREEMENT ON URBAN COOPERATION

Afghan foreign minister Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta signed today in Kabul the Exchange Notes on the Program for the improvement of Kabul Road Engineering Center. In this signing ceremony, Mr. Junichi Kosuge represented the government of Japan. The program is funded by the government of Japan with 800 million yen (approximately 6.7 million dollars). Program components include construction and renovation of various buildings such as the repair workshop, administrations building and heavy machinery parking buildings. The renovated center will serve as the principle technical center of the country's road administration and maintenance policy.

After Exchange of Notes, Dr. Spanta appreciated the active role Japan's is playing since the outset of Bonn Agreements in Afghanistan and thanked Japanese side for the pledges in the Berlin, Tokyo and London conferences. Dr. Spanta viewed the signing of this agreement as another major step towards the strengthening of relations between Afghanistan and Japan. At the end of this function, the floor was opened to questions from journalists. In a question concerning recent purported comment by the UNAMA's Spokesperson regarding the process of reconciliation, Dr. Spanta asked all member of the international community not to overstep the Afghan Government, Afghan constitution and also the UN resolutions concerning this issue. He said based on the Afghan constitution those who have not committed mass violation of human rights, war crimes and crimes against humanity are welcome to participate in the political process of the country.

EU MINISTERS APPROVE PLANS TO SET UP AFG POLICE TRAINING MISSION

European Union foreign ministers approved plans on Monday to set up a 230-strong police training mission in Afghanistan. The operation could be deployed as early as May, officials said, after planning is completed and a commander appointed. The EU ministers said in a statement the mission aims to build up "an Afghan police force in local ownership, that respects human rights and operates within the framework of the rule of law." EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner said Afghanistan's problems "cannot be solved without a stronger government and respect for the rule of law." She said the key challenges facing both Western donors and the Afghan government remained extending its authority into the provinces "and to stamp out narcotics production that destabilize the country politically and economically."

The EU force is meant to bolster NATO troops in Afghanistan in stabilizing the country and spreading the rule of law. The United States is also stepping up training for the Afghan security forces. Under the EU plan 160 police officers and up to 70 additional legal and judicial experts will be deployed in Afghanistan. The mission will be based in Kabul but will also have officers in five regional commands. Officials said while the force is not large, it is focused on mentoring top officers and commanders in such areas as criminal investigations, border policing and in the training and education of police recruits. Ferrero-Waldner said the EU was giving special focus to boosting Afghan justice institutions, notably the supreme court, the Attorney General's office and the ministry of justice, which she said are all "in urgent need of reform."

She said the country's judicial system was operating with staff who had insufficient training, and were badly paid, opening them up to possible corruption. The mission is to cost the EU 40 million (US\$52 million) this year, however it is unclear how long the mission will last. It is expected a current 40-strong German police training mission in Kabul will be merged with the EU mission, officials said. Besides police training, legal experts will also be sent to help with the selection and training of judges and to set up courts across the country. The mission comes as international donors step up aid to Afghanistan amid renewed concern that reconstruction efforts are faltering in the wake of Taliban offensives. The EU's Commission earlier this month proposed a new 600 million (US\$780 million) package for Afghanistan to focus on health, justice and rural development over the next four years.

UN CONCERNED ABOUT EROSION OF MEDIA FREEDOM IN AFG

The UN mission in Kabul expressed concern Monday about attempts to curb the media in Afghanistan and said truth should not become a victim of the Taliban insurgency. UN representative Tom Koenigs noted reports of journalists being intimidated and the forced resignation of the head of national broadcaster Radio Television Afghanistan for reasons that were not made clear. Parliament is also planning to amend the media law "in a manner that will harm media development in Afghanistan," Koenigs said at a media briefing. "It is often said that the first victim of war is the truth. We must prevent that from becoming the case in Afghanistan," he said.

The insurgency makes heavy use of propaganda that says the government violates Islamic principles. Parliament, dominated by former warlords, is due to revise in the coming weeks a media law decreed by President Hamid Karzai two years ago after complaints that the private media has become "unIslamic". Koenigs also denounced a move by the lower house of parliament to push through a bill that would pardon abuses and war crimes during Afghanistan's years of conflict. "Only the victims can forgive," he said. Officials have said the bill runs counter to the constitution and is unlikely to get the upper house and presidential approval needed to become law.

AFGHANISTAN: EU AID TARGETS JUSTICE SYSTEM

Foreign ministers from the European Union have approved a new mission to help train Afghan police. EU foreign ministers agreed to send about 150 police officers, plus other experts, to Afghanistan to help train that country's national police force. The 27 ministers said in a statement today that the mission is aimed at furthering respect for human rights and the rule of law and driving police reform at the "central, regional, and provincial" levels. EU officials say it could also pave the way for more ambitious EU efforts in Afghanistan -- including assistance revamping key legal institutions. Before today's meeting, EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner described Afghanistan's current legal architecture as inadequate in most respects. Ferrero-Waldner said ahead of today's meeting that the police mission is a harbinger of bigger things to come. She said the EU will provide 600 million euros (\$777 million) over the next four years to help fund Afghanistan's public administration, with a particular focus on the legal system. "We intend to put a very special focus now on strengthening public administration, and also in particular the reform of the key legal institutions," Ferrero-Waldner said.

Focus On Justice

Ferrero-Waldner said about 40 percent of the funds will be earmarked for reforms in the justice sector. The EU has contributed roughly 135 million euros to police reform in Afghanistan since 2002. Most of that money has helped pay salaries and train Afghan National Police officers. EU aid to the police will continue. But Ferrero-Waldner suggested that police reforms are well entrenched, so Brussels wants to more actively support the judiciary and prosecutorial processes. Ferrero-Waldner said Afghanistan's justice sector is in urgent need of reform. "All three justice institutions -- that is, the supreme court on the one hand, it's the attorney general's office on the other hand, [and] the Ministry of Justice -- they are absolutely in urgent need of reform," Ferrero-Waldner said. "And I must say -- let me be blunt -- the system is operating with staff who are insufficiently trained or educated -- recruited through a system that is not at all transparent -- and who do not operate under very credible mechanisms for [ensuring] accountability and discipline."

'Key Challenge' Lies Outside Kabul

Ferrero-Waldner said that, in the future, the EU will place experts in key Afghan legal institutions to help draft a blueprint for what she said will be "major reforms." She said the EU wants to improve the quality of the justice system, provide a better recruitment and career structure for judges and public prosecutors, and develop a "code of ethics." There will be an accompanying effort to ensure that judges and public prosecutors are better paid and to streamline their career structure. Ferrero-Waldner said the EU believes the "key challenge" in resolving Afghanistan's problems is extending the central government's authority outside Kabul -- that and stamping out the illegal-drugs trade. But she said EU assistance will be limited to working directly with Kabul and the central government will remain responsible for "spreading out" the rule of law into the provinces. Ferrero-Waldner said this strategy is already bearing fruit in northern and northeastern Afghanistan. She cited "good success" in eradicating poppy fields in the northeastern province of Nangahar. Officials in Brussels conceded privately that the security situation southern Afghanistan remains too dangerous to station EU officials there.

AFGHANISTAN BANS POULTRY IMPORTS

Afghanistan has banned poultry imports to prevent the spread of the deadly H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus, an official said on Sunday. The H5N1 strain was found in poultry in at least four provinces in 2006, leading to the killing of thousands of birds, although there were no human deaths.

Health ministry adviser doctor Abdullah Fahim said, "This decision is part of a precautionary and preventive measure." He added that the government was also focussing on public awareness programmes about the virus. Afghanistan imports a large amount of poultry, mostly from Pakistan, but the ban imposed last week also applies to other countries hit by H5N1, including Britain, Turkey and Indonesia.

A CELEBRATION FOR AFGHAN'S WORLD-RENOWNED RUGS

The southeastern U.S city of Atlanta recently hosted an exhibition celebrating Afghanistan's world-renowned rugs and the part they have played in shaping the nation's heritage and culture. Sponsored by the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, DC and the U.S. Department of Commerce, the show was designed to attract buyers and re-energize the product identity, or "brand," that Afghanistan's rugs have developed over centuries. VOA's George Dwyer narrates for producer Tony Budny. It is the most prestigious event of its kind in the United States -- Atlanta's annual International Area Rug Market at the city's AmericasMart Exposition Center. This year the show featured a major exhibit on the rugs of Afghanistan, sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce David Sampson says, "This Afghan rug trade mission is an important part of the Commerce Department's strategy to help develop Afghanistan's private sector and increase trade between the U.S. and Afghanistan and we invited them to showcase their best products at America's premier rug show."

Sampson says the goal of the exhibit organizers is to encourage better commercial relationships between the U.S. and Afghanistan. Trade between the two nations has been seriously weakened by decades of armed conflict in Afghanistan. Now there is an effort to turn that around. "We believe that it is possible to build a very broad-based export-based economy within Afghanistan and the commitment of the United States and certainly the Department of Commerce is long-term to help build this economic recovery." Those sentiments were echoed by Afghanistan's Ambassador to the United States Said Tayeb Jawad. "The possibilities for the expansion of the Afghan rug market into the U.S. is big as you know. Fortunately there is a lot of good will in the United States for Afghanistan, for the Afghan culture. Most of the Afghan products -- including rugs - - have duty free access to U.S. markets and with your support and assistance we are hopeful to re-establish the share of the Afghan market in the United States once again." Sharon Kerwick came to Atlanta as a professional appraiser representing potential buyers. She acknowledges there is a lot of work put into production. "This is interesting to me as a collector because it is a particular design I have not seen before and there is a lot of work involved. Looking closer she adds, "There are quite a few techniques in this particular piece. The quality is the full range. AFG wools are fine; sometimes you even find a little silk."

The large turnout at this event helped remind visitors here that, for all the turmoil of recent decades, Afghanistan is still among the world's most important producers of handmade ornamental rugs. Growth in this market sector offers the promise of growth and stability as a whole for a national transitioning into increased participation in the global economy. Mohammad Amin Farhang is Afghanistan's Minister for Commerce. He says the country is trying to improve. "This is a very important and critical time. Before, the government has control over all markets and trade. But now the country is trying to improve its private sector so that people from different areas are encouraged to work together and take this private sector to the next level." The exhibit also helped to reinforce the fact that Afghanistan's rugs are a vital part of its national identity, and serve as powerful symbols of building on the past to create a better future for the country. "President Bush is committed to helping rebuild Afghanistan and achieve great security and prosperity for its people and this exhibit is a down payment on that commitment," Sampson said. It is also a colorful reminder of the ancient roots of Afghanistan's international trade.

AISA DELEGATION TO ATTEND TRADE EXHIBITION IN INDIA

Afghanistan will participate in the four-day international conference on trade promotion scheduled to begin in the Indian city of Mumbai from February 24. Walid Tamim, an official of the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA), said 150,000 participants from all over the world would attend the conference and trade exhibition. He said AISA officials and a delegation comprising local businessmen would join the conference on behalf of the government. During the four-day conference, AISA officials would discuss ideas with foreign investors and inform them about the investment-friendly environment in the country, said the official.

Besides, the Afghan traders would also sign different agreements with other business companies and find business partners during the Mumbai conference, he informed. Walid said the Afghan delegation would also attend a meeting on promotion of imports and exports. Over one billion US dollars had been invested in the country during the previous year, said Omar Zakhelwal, head of AISA. He said holding of such conferences would help attract foreign investment in Afghanistan.

SAFMA OPENS BRANCH IN AFGHANISTAN

The South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA) on Monday formally opened its branch in Afghanistan. The branch was opened during the visit of SAFMA's three-member delegation, including its India's general secretary Vinod Sharma, SAFMA's Pakistan president Nusrat Javeed and its NWFP president Rahimullah Yousafzai, to Kabul. The delegation had arrived here on Saturday. Earlier, journalists from about 40 print and electronic media outlets elected Mohammad Halim Fidai as president of SAFMA Afghanistan during a gathering held here last night.

President of Afghanistan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA) Rahimullah Samandar was elected general secretary of the association. Other office-bearers of the association included: Fatana Gilani, vice president, Amanullah Khalilyar, second vice president, Humaira Kawoon and Abdul Zahir, joint secretaries. Speaking to Pajhwok Afghan News, Fidai said the step would help Afghan journalists in establishing close relations with journalists from the South Asian countries and the world. SAFMA's Pakistan president Nusrat Javeed said it would bring Afghanistan closer to the regional and international media. SAFMA's India general secretary Vinod Sharma said next meeting of the association would be held in April in New Delhi ahead of the meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member countries.

He said journalists from member countries should be allowed to visit each others countries without any hindrance. A media organisation of the SAARC member countries, SAFMA was established in 1998 in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan. It held its first meeting in the same city. The member countries included: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Afghanistan.

INDIA IS AFG'S MOST CHERISHED PARTNER: KARZAI

India has contributed over \$750 million in terms of aid and construction to Afghanistan till now in almost every sector, including education and agriculture, and is the country's most cherished partner, says Hekmat Karzai, a cousin of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. 'India is the most cherished partner of Afghanistan. The relationship between our two countries is only improving,' Karzai, director of the Kabul-based Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies, told INEP in an interview. Karzai said that India has awarded 500 scholarships for Afghan students.

'There is very high-level visibility and high-level (bilateral) delegations going back and forth. The relations have improved and I think India has been a very positive actor in the region,' said Karzai, who was in Brussels to attend a conference on Afghanistan organised by Centre for European Policy Studies, a Brussels-based think tank. Commenting on Afghanistan-Pakistan ties, he said Afghanistan is grateful for what Pakistan had done during the Soviet invasion or even for Afghan refugees. 'The sad thing is that the relationship (between Afghanistan and Pakistan) has not been as fruitful as it could have been.' Commenting on media reports of a major Taliban offensive, Karzai, who has served in his country's embassy in Washington, said he does not think it will be a serious challenge. 'We will deal with it with NATO and the coalition forces and the Afghan national army,' he said.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: 300 CASES REGISTERED IN '06

KABUL, Feb 12 (Pajhwok Afghan News): The Ministry of Women Affairs on Monday announced that 300 cases of violation of women rights were registered in the country over the previous year. Speaking at a news conference here, Qazi Fauzia Amini, head of the women rights department said some 530 such cases were registered in 2005. However, the ratio had dropped to 300 during 2006.

Those cases included forced marriages, murder, rape, beating, self-immolation and suicides. She said decades of war and civil strife, illiteracy, widespread poverty and respect for outdated customs and tradition were the main elements responsible for violence against women in the country.

HOW ONE COMPANY HAS SPEARHEADED A FAIR TRADE GARMENT INDUSTRY IN AFG

Created Hundreds of New Jobs, and is Contributing to the Reduction of Chinese and Pakistani Imports

When Tarsian & Binkley first started out in 2003, many did not believe that its plans to establish large-scale garment manufacturing in Afghanistan were viable. There were absolutely no organized garment facilities anywhere in the country and the landlocked terrain, lack of reliable power and water, harsh weather conditions, corrupt borders, and general lawlessness within Afghanistan made the proposal an even unlikelier one. But Nasrullah Rahmati, principal of Tarsian & Binkley, is a believer. Despite a multiplicity of pitfalls and hazards not encountered by most apparel businesses, Tarsian & Binkley has just achieved a major milestone in the past few months ? the opening of a full-scale facility that is now producing thousands of units of goods per month. Tarsian & Binkley first established its reputation as a socially conscious ?ethno-chic? brand, with production in Kabul as early as 2002. The Company created jobs for local female artisans while producing editorially celebrated fashions for the higher-end export market that were featured in fashion media outlets such as Daily Candy, Lucky Magazine, the New York Times Style section, amongst many others. Over time, the Company became formally engaged with a local partner, Nasrullah Rahmati, who was a master tailor by training.

Nasrullah?s vision transcended the focus on small volumes of high end goods. He was interested in addressing the needs of the local market. In 2005, Tarsian & Binkley qualified to purchase land within the new USAID-sponsored industrial park in the Bagrami district of Kabul. There, out of 34 separate lots, Tarsian & Binkley became one of the first facilities to complete construction and initiate work. Why all the hurry? Because the US Military, who oversee all the purchasing for the Afghan National Army and Police, was keen to see the implementation of its Afghans First Policy. And Nasrullah, who was a master tailor by profession, a former mujahed, and patriot in the most traditional Afghan sense, was willing to overcome the massive obstacles of setting up a local factory in order to see his countrymen employed. Nasrullah says that his favorite days at the factory are Thursdays (paydays). He reaps pleasure from seeing his employees collecting their salaries in a country where years of instability have left a shattered economy and minimal constancy in people?s lives.

This past Sunday, February 11th, Tarsian & Binkley held a particularly special event at its facility ? the graduation of 150 local women from a six month tailoring training course conducted by the local non-profit Maharat and sponsored by the Canada Fund and GTZ. Maharat, which specializes in tailoring-related vocational training, was able to train the majority of these women to acquire marketable skills. And on Saturday, February 17th, 100 of these women were taken as employees at the Tarsian & Binkley facility.

There are now 140 male tailors working between two shifts at the facility, as well as 100 women serving as tailors, cutters, pressers, and quality control personnel. This is a key milestone in a country where poor legal regulation has led to the flooding of the market with inexpensive Chinese goods. The tradition of tailoring and the corner tailor shop, one that has been long embedded in Afghanistan, is threatened for the first time in history. It is sad but understandable to see the general population has been turning en masse to cheaper Chinese goods. However, it is a travesty to see that the apparel goods worn by the national military and police are also made in China or Pakistan! Literally hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on these, only to enrich overseas traders and foreign businesses. Tarsian & Binkley is the first apparel facility of its kind on Afghan soil to directly combat this problem. Tarsian & Binkley provides a healthy, clean work environment with internationally-accepted fair pay rates pay for its workers. It uses industrial-grade electric machinery and is keen to continually refine its processes to become the first truly state-of-the-art apparel manufacturing facility in Afghanistan. The intention is not just to produce Tarsian & Binkley?s in-house womenswear line, but to establish a proper contracting facility where overseas businesses can manufacture and tap into the talented labor pool of Afghanistan.

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Tarsian & Binkley started out as a design company that offers a cultural and economic bridge between socially conscious clothing and accessories and the truly fashion forward woman. The label has carved a unique niche for itself in the fusion of edgy Western style with age-old Afghan handiwork techniques. With a workshop established in Kabul, the company is helping to develop the Afghan economy and to improve the lives of Afghan people by tapping into a viable labor pool there. In 2003, the company earned the distinction of Grand Prize winner at the Global Social Venture Competition, sponsored by the Goldman Sachs Foundation and the Haas and Columbia Business School.

AFGHAN ANALYST SAYS AFGHAN-IRAN TIES FRUITFUL

A leading Afghan analyst has called on the international community to engage with Iran and warned that any hostile action against the Islamic Republic would lead to serious consequences for the whole region. "Relations with Iran have been fruitful. Iran hasn't conducted any suspicious activities that would lead us to believe otherwise," Hekmat Karzai, director of the Kabul-based NGO Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies told IRNA in an interview in Brussels. "They have engaged Afghanistan and the people. They have supported our western province of Herat remarkably. The relation has been positive thus far," said Karzai, who was in Brussels to attend a conference on Afghanistan. Hikmet, a cousin of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, said he understood Iran's concern over the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But, he said, "I have heard many Afghan government officials say that they will not allow anybody to use Afghanistan as a base for operation against any of its neighbors."

He said engaging Iran in dialogue will be much more fruitful than taking hostile acts that will lead to serious consequences for the whole region. "I am for engagement with Iran," he stressed. Commenting on reports that the Taliban were recruiting and gathering forces for a major spring offensive, Karzai said that "whatever their offensive maybe I don't think there will be a strategic serious challenge." "We will deal with it particularly with NATO and the coalition forces and the Afghan national army," he said. Karzai, who has served as first secretary in the Afghan embassy in Washington in the past, admitted that some innocent people have been killed in NATO raids in Afghanistan. "But the reality is that there is still very much support for the international community in Afghansitan. They don't want to go back to the draconian rule, in particular what was forced upon them before 9/11," Karzai told IRNA.

He said the Afghan people were grateful for what Pakistan had done during the Soviet invasion or even for its refugees. "The sad thing is that the (Afghan-Pak) relationship has not been as fruitful as it could have been." He said there were allegations of Taliban sanctuaries in Afghanistan. Pakistan has done much in the global war against terror and has lost over 700 soldiers, noted Karzai, adding that "personally I believe it can do much more in terms of dealing with extremism."

AFGHANISTAN VOWS MORE ACTION ON DRUGS

Afghanistan, the world's leading opium producer, vowed to take "strong action" against the drug and said it had made a start by destroying thousands of hectares (acres) of poppy fields this year. Around 1,500 drug traffickers had been arrested since May 2005 when Afghanistan's first-ever drugs court was opened, Deputy Interior Minister General Mohammad Daud Daud said at the opening of a new court building. The court has investigated 740 cases and convicted 326 people for offences such as selling or transporting opium and heroin, officials said. "The government is serious and we will take strong action," Daud said on Monday. "There will be significant reduction." "We have made very important progress. At the beginning of 2006 we had not yet started the (eradication) campaign but this year 4,250 hectares (10,500 acres) of poppy lands have been already destroyed," he said.

However a September 2006 report by Daud's ministry and the United Nations showed that about 14 percent of the roughly 15,000 hectares of poppy fields eradicated last year had already been destroyed in the first two months. About 165,000 hectares of opium were cultivated last year, a 59 percent jump on the previous year and a record high, the report showed, despite British- and US-funded programmes costing millions of dollars. Afghanistan now produces more than 90 percent of the world's opium. Critics say the government is not doing enough to fight its opium trade, which supplies Europe, the Middle East and Asia with heroin and supports a Taliban insurgency that is fiercest in the main drug production areas. The chief of investigations in the drugs court said it was aiming for the top levels of the drugs trade. "We are continually building intelligence and prosecuting crimes, which will enable us to bring down the highest echelons of the drug trafficking networks," Noor Mohammed said.

AFGHAN WOMEN GROW TREES TO LIFT THEIR OWN LIVES

QALAT, Afghanistan (AFP) - Row upon row of saplings stand in the sun in the capital of Afghanistan's drought-hit Zabul province where war and poverty have left ancient underground irrigation channels dry and the hills bare. These young plants have been weeded and watered and brought to life in this tough terrain by some of the poorest women of Qalat who are reaching for more in a harsh world --- at risk to their personal safety. Almonds and apricots, cedar and cypress, pine and pistachio: a lot rides on these 203,720 saplings. The 90 women who raise them are paid with 61 kilogrammes (134 pounds) of oil, wheat, pulses and salt a month as a part of a "food for work" programme on which many Qalat families depend. Their labour also earns them lessons in reading and writing, nutrition and health care -- for some the first schooling in their lives. When the saplings are ready for planting, half will go to adopt-a-tree and other projects to re-green this barren-looking land, perhaps helping to re-establish the almond orchards that are the pride of Zabul.

The rest will go to the women to seed small businesses selling the trees or their harvest, or just to provide their families with fruit and nuts. Inside a new building under the nursery's scraggly pines, row upon row of women sit on the floor, facing a teacher. Many have pulled their blue burqas back over their faces because there are visitors. Hands and feet are red with henna; children fidget as their mothers recite phrases written on the board. It has been a struggle to get these women here. Zabul, like all of southern Afghanistan, is deeply conservative and influenced by the extremist Taliban religious movement, whose insurgency keeps the nation unstable. "Women of child-bearing age are not allowed to go outside the home, only very old women and widows can have some activity," says the province's top women's affairs official, Gulnar Rashidi. "If men are willing to let women have social activity, other men criticise them," Rashidi says. When the nursery was set up in June 2005, anonymous letters were sent to mosques warning "if they let women go to the centre, we will burn their houses, we will not let them live in our villages," Rashidi says.

Rashidi has also been threatened: she has bodyguards and her husband has implored her to not travel with their two children. Her counterpart in Kandahar province was assassinated in September. There was also an attempt to allow only men to take part in the nursery. Rashidi fought hard -- and won. But even convincing women of the benefits of literacy is challenging in a province where the first girls' school is still at the planning stage. "The women of Zabul are completely illiterate -- the educated ones come from other provinces," says Rashidi, a medical doctor from the capital, Kabul. "The women don't know the uses and benefits of studying because they couldn't know." The lure was the chance of a job in an office to earn a bit of cash, she says. Project coordinator Atiqullah Baramzai points to the road outside the compound where a suicide blast about four months ago shattered newly installed windows and doors. "The women are very brave," he says, blaming the attack on the Taliban. "Sometimes we get threats in the mosque or from men on motorbikes who ride past. We feel worried. If the door opens, we worry," says Nasreen, who wears a large black shawl.

Nasreen supervises 80 home-based nurseries run by women who cannot leave their houses because they must care for their children -- or because their husbands will not allow them. "People warn me, they threaten me, but I still come. Everybody knows the problems but they are coming to earn something and have a better future," she says. But 100 women have dropped out because of the insecurity. There are other problems: water is in short supply because traditional underground irrigation systems fell into ruin during the past wars and there is little rain or snow to feed them. New wells have not been completed. And as the project -- part of the UN-backed Green Afghanistan Initiative (GAIN) -- comes into fruition with the first trees ready for planting next month, its funding dries up in June.

MORE NORWEGIAN TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN

The Government will increase the Norwegian military contingent in Afghanistan. Around 150 Norwegian special forces will be sent to Kabul. This was confirmed by Defence Minister Minister Anne-Grete Stroem-Erichsen Tuesday morning in an interview with NRK, while Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere informed Parliament (Stortinget). The fresh troops will support the state administration and other institutions in Kabul. According to NRK, the decision has brought on strong reactions from provincial leaders of the government coalition party, the Socialist Left (SV). When NATO last requested more troops from Norway for Afghanistan, SV reacted strongly, and the Government ended up not sending more troops.

U.S. FUNDING CONSTRUCTION OF 100 POSTS ALONG AFGHAN-PAK BORDER

Washington - US president George W. Bush has said that the United States was funding the construction of 100 border posts along the Pakistan-Afghan border to provide Pakistan better access to this remote region. The US, he said, was also providing Pakistan air support to help fight the terrorists operating in the tribal belt. "We've given him (President Musharraf) high-tech equipment to help the Pakistani forces locate the terrorists attempting to cross the border. We're funding an air wing, with helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, to give Pakistan better security, better swift response and better surveillance," he said on Thursday during a speech at Washington's conservative American Enterprise Institute. Bush said the part of US strategy is to help Musharraf defeat the terrorists and extremists who operate inside of Pakistan and for that "we're going to work Pakistan and Afghanistan to enhance cooperation to defeat what I would call a common enemy."

The US president expressed strong support for his Pakistani counterpart. "People say, well, do you think President Musharraf really understands the threat of extremists in his midst? I said, yes, I do. You know how I know? They've tried to kill him," he said. "Al-Qaeda has launched attacks against the president of this country. He understands. He also understands that extremists can destabilise countries on the border, or destabilise countries from which they launch their attacks. And so he's launched what they call a frontier strategy and that is, to find and eliminate the extremists and deliver a better governance and economic opportunity." He said that with US support president Musharraf was going to better be able to now deal with this problem. Bush said that during his recent visit to Pakistan his defence secretary received 'a good response' from Musharraf, 'an ally in this war on terror and it's in our interest to support him in fighting the extremists'. Bush recalled that at a dinner he hosted for Musharraf and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai on 28 September, he had urged the two leaders to put aside their differences and "strategise together" on ways to defeat the common enemy of terrorism.

Bush disclosed that he also met the two leaders privately to discuss shared interests. Despite tensions of their history, Bush said, both agreed to share intelligence and expand trade. Bush said he also offered economic incentives to the two countries to end their differences, telling their leaders that Afghan and Pakistani entrepreneurs could export locally produced products to the United States duty free. "It's a tiny contribution for us ' a major contribution for them,' he added. Bush said he hoped to help Musharraf repel Taliban forces that had been holed up in the mountains between the two countries. He announced that he was sending additional US troops and funds to Afghanistan to defeat an expected spring assault from the Taliban and urged NATO to do more, too. "We'll deploy a replacement force that will sustain this increase for the foreseeable," future, said Bush. To buttress the Afghan government against expected attacks in the future, he said he was asking Congress for 11.8 billion dollars "to help this young democracy survive".

"When our commanders on the ground say to our respective countries 'We need additional help', our NATO countries must provide it, he told an audience of mainly lawmakers, diplomats and academics. Bush also urged some NATO countries to change their policy of not allowing their troops in Afghanistan's combat zones. "Allies must lift restrictions on the forces they do provide so Nato commanders have the flexibility they need to defeat the enemy wherever the enemy may make its stand," he said. Bush said he had extended the stay of 3,200 US troops now in Afghanistan for four months and he would deploy a replacement force for the future as well. Bush said the US and NATO would also help increase Afghanistan's security forces - ' doubling the army's size to 70,000 from 32,000 over the next two years.

The US president outlined an ambitious plan - from increasing the Afghan security and police forces to building the country's rural economy, in an effort - to stabilise the population. Among the important steps, he said, was helping to rebuild Afghanistan's highway system, and attacking poppy cultivation, which he called "a direct threat to a free future", and fight corruption in the courts.

PHILANTHROPIST DONATES \$75,000 FOR HOSPITAL

HERAT CITY, Feb 10 (Pajhwok Afghan News): Work on a private hospital funded by a US-based Afghan started on Saturday in the western province of Herat. Dr Abdul Hakim Tamana, deputy chief of the public health department, said the hospital in Gozra district would have eight wards for patients. It will be constructed on about one acre of land.

Mohammad Ibrahim Mujaddidi, an Afghan national based in the United States, will fund the project, which will be completed at the cost of \$75,000. The hospital will serve 15,000 residents of the area, said Tamana.

Construction of the hospital will be completed in one year. He said expatriates were generously contributing in carrying forward welfare projects in the province. Two such clinics had already been built in Adraskan and Zindajan districts.



CULTURAL EVENTS

THERE IS NO CULTURAL NEWS IN THIS ISSUE.



KABUL UPDATE

THE DK GERMAN MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC CENTER



The DK-German Medical Diagnostic Center is established to provide a high quality medical care for all patients. All services are offered according to required German and international quality standards and guidelines. To guarantee this quality, we use German medical devices, equipment, diagnostic reagents, X-ray films and pharmaceuticals.

The DK-German Medical Center is staffed by German healthcare professionals. Our Staff will ensure all patients receive a thorough research treatment that is consistent with contemporary standards.

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Sunday-Thursday : 09:00 – 17:00

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NO APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

Please note:

We require a deposit of AFA 5000 (USD 100 or EUR 80).

If the total cost of treatment is less, than the deposit, we will reimburse the remainder of your deposit.

Thank you for your understanding.

AWANAMA PRODUCTIONS & CONSULTING

Welcome to AwaNama Productions & Consulting! www.awanama.com

We are happy to introduce you to AwaNama Productions & Consulting. A new company that has replaced our former media organization, Public and Development Service for Afghanistan (PDSA).

Under the new name, we will continue to fund and support the popular public service radio outlet of Good Morning Afghanistan (GMA), manage the development of Peace Radio programming content, and run other public information campaigns for government (GOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs).

We have now expanded our activities offering services not only in **electronic and print media** but also in **consultancy, advertising, design and distribution** spheres. The new name allows us to serve you in a more extended and dynamic spectrum where we will use all our available resources and skills to bring you highest quality services and cooperate with you in fulfilling your objectives.

Please find more information regarding AwaNama's services and skills on our website: www.awanama.com . The Dari and Pashto versions will follow later.

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ROYA MATTRESS

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Please contact us by email if you are looking for quantity purchases or hard to find Items & sizes of Bedroom Furniture's through our email : <mailto:kabulmattress@gmail.com> and we will share additional information or visit our Store/Showroom in Kabul Share Now Opp. UN Guesthouse and in Herat in Kabul Bank Building. We are also planning to open a new branch in Mazare city soon.

Please share this announcement with Friends new in Kabul or have planned to visit Kabul to make their stay more comfortable. Roya Mattress Kabul contacts, Phone: 70-283 856 and 020 200 1656 or please contact us through above email links.

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Information:

Email: info@olgkابل.com, Phone: +93(0)70 68 37 37

Sean Donlan, Project Manager, Mobile: +93(0)70 68 28 28

Email: sean.donlan@olgkابل.com

Peter Klawitter, Branch Manager, Mobile: +93(0)70 68 27 27

Email: peter.klawitter@olgkابل.com

PHYSIOTHERAPY HOME VISIT IN KABUL

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Emails:ahi_iqbal@yahoo.com physiomti@gmail.com

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Mstar offers vehicles to rent for business or personal use. We provide quality vehicles, professional drivers, prompt service, and competitive rates. <http://leasing.msent.org>

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United Products

Purchase adventure gear and clothing as well as unique Afghan handmade items. Visit our showroom in Kote Sangi. <http://united.msent.org> (coming soon), united@msent.org. Our contact is following.

Joshua Atkinson

general manager, morning star enterprises, kabul

cell:+93.799.598.860, Office:+1.719.219.6802

joshua@msent.org, www.msent.org, INFO@MSENT.ORG

ATM AVAILABLE



AIB ATMs are available at the following locations:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
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| ☼ Hotel Intercontinental | ☼ Camp Phoenix |
| ☼ Kabul Airport | ☼ Camp Dogan |
| ☼ Camp Eggers | ☼ Camp Warehouse |
| ☼ ISAF HQ | ☼ AIB Microrayan
Cash outlet |
| ☼ Bagram Airbase 2 ATMs | |
| ☼ KAIA Base | ☼ AIB Kandahar Branch |



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Maple Leaf Inn offers hospitality, comfort and peace of mind to those seeking a friendly and safe place to stay while away from home. Our beautifully appointed rooms (suite, deluxe and standard) are available on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Each room comes with Air-Conditioning, Full Bathroom, Cable Television, Telephone, Coffee-Maker, Mini-Bar and etc. All service, such as room and laundry services are also available 24-hours a day, as are our efficient team of concierge and room attendants.

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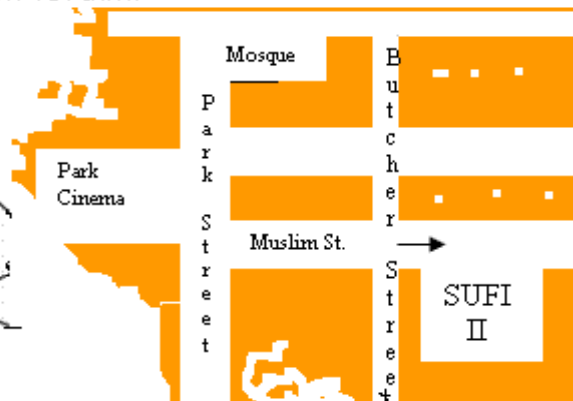
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MISCELLANEOUS

DONATE ENGLISH BOOKS

Hi, i am the New Librarian at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) in Kabul. I would like to encourage anyone who would like to donate any English language books (fiction, history, social sciences, math) on any topic to please contact me at jmalone@auaf.net or at info@auaf.net. We are located on Darulaman Road next to the Cure Hospital.

I am originally from Tennessee, near the Blue Ridge/Smoky Mountains. If there are any fellow Southerners here in Kabul i would be glad to hear from you. I am also looking to increase my social circle, so i am open to suggestions for activities to do this. Thanks!

LOOKING FOR A ROOM

Couple looking to share a room in a house with expats in Kabul for six months to a year beginning April 2007. No pets. Please email escoserv@hotmail.com

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We are leaving in April after many years here, and our Afghan nanny is looking for a job. She has taken care of our daughter from the age of 6 months to 2 years, and before that she had taken care of a young French boy (from 4 months to 3 years). She is excellent with babies and young children, hard working and very reliable. If you are interested, please email me on : madera_grantmanager@yahoo.fr and we would be happy to introduce her to you.

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I am expatriate recently arrived in Kabul and I am keen to learn Dari. I have found information about an organisation which can provide 60 minute classes and charges \$10 dollar for a private class or \$5 each for 2 or more people. I would rather learn with others but have yet to find anyone who is at my very basic level. Please contact me if you like to join classes. I can be contacted on 0797162474 or email: dahlgrenk@hotmail.com.

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PHYSIOTHERAPIST IN KABUL

My name is M Traiq Iqbal physiotherapist having 4 year university degree in physiotherapy from tehran and giving home visit physiotherapy for expatriate community in kabul. Please contact me for appointment. My mobile 0093 (0)70288351

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All candidates, whether local or foreign, should speak English and have significant work experience. Dari, Pashtu, Russian, Turkish language abilities considered a plus. If interested, please send your CV to hrdirector@tfi-intl.com. Our website is at www.tfi-intl.com.

**UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN
(UNAMA)**

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Fax: +1-212-963-2669

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has the following vacancies for the interested Afghan nationals. For more information on this vacant positions please go to UNAMA website <http://www.unama-afg.org/va/vacancies.htm>.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 028/02/2007

Title:	RRR/IDG Officer
Number of posts:	One
Type of contract:	Appointment for Limited Duration (ALD)
Category:	National Professional Officer (NPO)
Level:	NO-B
Duration:	First three months (probationary period – renewable)
Duty station:	Kabul
Unit/Section:	Central Regional Office
Issuing date:	14 February 2007
Closing date:	13 March 2007

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 030/02/2007

Title:	Public Information Officer
Number of posts:	One
Type of contract:	Appointment for Limited Duration (ALD)
Category:	National Professional Officer (NPO)
Level:	NO-B
Duration:	First three months (probationary period – renewable)
Duty station:	Kunduz
Unit/Section:	OCPI
Issuing date:	15 February 2007
Closing date:	1 March 2007

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT #033/02/2007

Title: **PABX Telephone Technician**
 Number of posts: One post
 Type of contract: Appointment for Limited Duration (ALD)
 Grade: GSL / 4
 Category: General Service (Local)
 Duration: First three months (probationary period – renewable)
 Duty station: Kabul
 Unit/Section: CITS
 Issuing date: 15 Feb 2007
 Closing date: 2 Mar 2007

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 031/02/2007

Title:	Senior Political Affairs Assistant
Number of posts:	One Post
Type of contract:	Appointment for Limited Duration (ALD)
Grade:	GSL-5
Category:	General Service (Local)
Duration:	First three months (probationary period – renewable)
Duty station:	Kabul
Unit/Section:	Office of SRSG
Issuing date:	15 Feb 2007
Closing date:	2 March 2007

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT #032/02/2007

Title: **Administrative Clerk**
Number of posts: One
Type of contract: Appointment for Limited Duration (ALD)
Category: General Services (Local)
Grade: GSL-3
Duration: First three months (probationary period – renewable)
Duty station: Kabul
Unit/Section: Pillar II
Issuing date: 15 Feb 2007
Closing date: 2 Mar 2007

Under the overall control/supervision of Head of Office for Central Region and direct supervision of the RRR/IDG Officer, the incumbent will be responsible for the following:

Applicants meeting the above qualifications are requested to submit a cover letter quoting this Vacancy Announcement title and number along with their Curriculum Vitae; P-11 form photocopies of certificates to:

Only applications that clearly indicate the vacancy number on the envelope; or in the subject of the email (if the application is being sent electronically), will be reviewed. Application can be sent to:

Personnel Section, UN Operation Centre in Afghanistan (UNOCA), Jalalabad Road, Kabul, Afghanistan, OR

Email to: unamav@un.org

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Dr. Rafiq Amin

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WHAT'S ON DIRECTORY



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0799-354090, spsndat@mail.com

Rose Garden Palace Hotel, 0799-013055

070-70271107, [Email: carwan_sarai@yahoo.com](mailto:carwan_sarai@yahoo.com)

Mustafa Hotel 070-276021, Mustafa_hotel@yahoo.com

B'Place Guest House 070-276416, 070276711

Park Residence Guest House

EURO Guest House 070-197220/0799342705

HEETAL G. House 0799-167824/0799159697

Ajmal Wali G.House, 070-277657, 0799335934

Star Inn Guest House, 0799-558787, 0799003333

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Kabul International Airport, 1 ATM, 24 hours open, currency US dollars

Kabul City Center, 1 ATM, 24 hours open, currency US dollars

Bagram Military Base, 1 ATM, 24 hours open, currency US dollars

ISAF HQ military Base, 1 ATM, 24 hours, currency US dollars and EURO

KAIA Military Base, 1 ATM, 24 hours, currency US dollars and EURO

SUPREME , Supreme PX, Jalalabad Road, 24/7, restricted access to compound. currency USD, Max 160

Kabul compound, next Amani High School, WAK, 24 hours, restricted access to the compound

Kabul International Airport, Great Masood Road, 24/7, currency USD. Limits Min - 40, Max – 160

US Embassy Kabul, Great Masood Road, 24/7, restricted access to compound. Currency USD, Max-150

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No	NAME	Cuisine	English Menu And/Or English Speaking Staff	Opening Hours	ADDRESS	PHONE	Phone Orders Home Delivery
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2.	DEHLI DARBAR Restaurant	Indian	English menu English speaking staff	10.00 – 22.00	Shar-e-now, Close to Women's Ministry	0799-324899 0799-833238	Phone orders
3.	POPOLANO Restaurant	French	English menu	09.00 – 22.00	Charahi Ansari Kabul	070-288116	Phone orders
4.	LAI THAI Restaurant	Thai	English menu English speaking staff	11.00 –21.00	Str15 Wazir Ak Khan House No.124	070-297557 070-278640	No
5.	B'S PLACE Restaurant(Guest.House)	Italian, Mexican	English menu	11.00 – 23.00	Str.2, Qala-e- fatullah House No.3	070-276416 070-276711	Phone order
6.	TAVERNE DU LIBAN	Libanes, Interna	English menu and speaking staff	11:00-22:00	Str10, Lane 3 WAK	0799-828376 070-210651	No
7.	VILA VELEBITA Restaurant/Bar	European	English menu	10.00 – 22.00	Str 10 Wazir Ak khan	0799-160368	No
8.	ISTANBUL Restaurant	Turkish	English menu	08.00 – 21.00	Macroian2, Matba block 104	070-200116 0799-356282	Phone orders
9.	ESCALADES Restaurant	European	English menu	10.00 – 22.00	1 st Qala-e-Fateullah	0799-473763 077-111615	No
10.	GOLDEN KEY SEA FOOD RES	Chinese	English menu	10.00 – 21.00	Str.13, Wazir Akbar Khan Kabul	0799-002800 0799-016591	No
11.	KULBA AFGHAN	Afghan, Italian	English menu	10:00 – 21.00	Shar-e-now, Esmat Moslim Str. 3 rd floor	0799452151 070034979	No
12.	SHAR-E-NOW BURGER	Fast Food	English menu	09.00 – 21.00	Shar-e-now, opposite park	0799-300797 070-255788	Phone order
13.	EVEREST PIZZA	Fast Food	English menu	09.00 – 21.00	13 Str.Wazir Akbar Khan, Kabul	0799-317979 070-263636	Phone orders/ home delivery
14.	SAMARQAND Restaurant/Bar	International	English menu	10:00 - 22:00	Qala Musa, near Panalpina	0799-234646 0799-118460	No
15.	CARLITOS Restaurant/Bar	Mexican	English Menu	10:00 - 22:00	Str 15 Wazir Ak Khan	0799-159697 0799-167824	No

16.	KABUL INN Guest H/Restaurant	International	English Menu	10:00-22:00	Qala-Fateullah, near Zarghoona school	0799-569355 020-2201407	No
17.	RED HOT SIZZLIN Restaurant	International	English Menu	11:00-21:00	Old macrorian, ARC Yuksel Camp		
18.	Shamiyana Restaurant Safi Landmark Hotel	Multi Cuisine	English menu and speaking staff	7:00-23:00	Kabul City Center	020-2203131	No
19.	FLOWER STREET CAFÉ, Restaurant	California Cuisine	English Menu	8:00 -17:00	House No.57, Str#7 Qala-e-Fatullah	070293124 0799356319	Yes, Phone order delivery
20.	SHANDIZ Restaurant	International	English Menu	10:00 – 21:00	Wazir Akbar Khan	0799-342928 070-284026	Yes
21.	Deutscher Hof Kabul Restaurant& G.House	German	German/ English Menu	11:00 – 23:30	Kalai Fattulah, Street 3, House 60	0799-322582	No
22.	BAKU Azerbaijani Restaurant	Azerbaijani	English Menu	11:00- 22:00	Street 15, Lane 5, House, 329 WAK	0799-083918 0799-827313	Free delivery
23.	CAFÉ ZARNEGAR	International (Buffet and a la carte)	English menu and Speaking staff	06.30 -22.00	Kabul Serena Hotel, Froshgah Street	0799-654000 ext. 4553	Yes
24.	SILK ROUTE	South East Asian (set menu available)	English menu and Speaking staff	18.00 -22.00	Kabul Serena Hotel, Froshgah Street	0799-654000 ext. 4554	Yes
25.	SERENA PASTRY SHOP	Freshly baked pastries and bread	English menu and Speaking staff	07.00 -20.00	Kabul Serena Hotel, Froshgah Street	0799-654000 ext. 4560	Yes
26.	ANAR Restaurant	Indian- Chinse	English menu and speaking staff	11:00-22:00	Str14, Lane 3 WAK	0799-567291	No
27.	SUFI Restaurant, No.2 Muslim Str. Shar	Afghani Food	English menu and speaking staff	11:00-22:00	Aryoob Cinema, 2 nd part of Karte Parwan	0799-337193 0798-190935	Yes
28.	KOREAN Restaurant	Korean	English menu and speaking staff	11:00-21:00	Str.2, house No.120, Karte-She, Kabul	0799 199509 0799 007546	Yes
29.	Springfield Restuarant	International	English menu and speaking staff	11:00-22:00	Str.15, 3 rd turn left house no.181 WAK	0799-001520 0799-150044	Yes
30.	Maple Leaf INN	International	English Menu	11:00-22:00	Haji Yaqob Str.3 SN	0799321-401	No
31.	Sky Line Restuarant	International	English Menu	11:00-22:00	Safi Landmark Hotel	020-2203131	No
32.		International	English Menu	11:00-22:00			