



April 2010



# Afghan News

## Highlighted Achievements

- The government has taken in over 1 billion dollars in revenue in the last year.
- The average Afghan income has increased 6-fold in the past 4 years.
- Over 13,000 km of rural roads have been restored, improved, or built since 2001.

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## Latest News

### H.E. President Karzai offers support for Kandahari students



H.E. President Hamid Karzai, during a meeting with students and teachers from Kandahar, called for more assistance for the local education sector.

The students asked for H.E. the President's help in regards to scholarships and expressed concern over a lack of text books and dormitories.

H.E. the President, who was accompanied by the provincial education director, called on H.E. the Minister of Education and other relevant authorities to provide further support and facilities.

Kandahar is presently home to around one hundred and thirty thousand students.

### H.E. Foreign Minister Rassoul speaks at United Nations Security Council debate convened by Japan

H.E. Foreign Minister Dr. Zalmay Rassoul delivered a statement to the United Na-

tions Security Council on April 16th at a high-level open debate on "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding."

The debate was convened by Japan, which holds the Presidency of the Council for the month of April, and was chaired by Japanese Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Katsuya Okada. Also speaking were H.E. Secretary-General Ban ki-Moon and ministers from Timor Leste, Sierra Leone, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

H.E. Minister Rassoul's statement focused on peacebuilding in Afghanistan. He highlighted the magnitude of destruction as a result of decades of conflict. Given these challenges, he said, "we have achieved remarkable success," in security sector reform and disarmament; in the political structure; in infrastructure building; in governance and services,



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particularly health and education; and in the economy.

H.E. Minister Rassoul cited continuing challenges particularly the security situation and the need for regional cooperation. H.E. also pointed out challenges in governance and in coordination, and pointed to solutions found in the new London strategy, proposed by President Karzai, which are aimed at building peace and stability and preventing a recurrence of conflict. In particular, he focused on the importance of Afghanization, of national leadership, and of a strong partnership between the international community and Afghanistan.

During this two-day visit to New York, the H.E. Minister Rassoul also met separately Friday afternoon with H.E. Mr. Ban ki-Moon and had lunch with H.E. Minister Okada followed by an Afghan-Japanese bilateral meeting.

H.E. Minister Rassoul's speech can be watched at:  
<http://www.afghanistan-un.org/2010/04/afghan-minister-of-foreign-affairs-visits-new-york/>

### **H.E. Foreign Minister Dr. Zalmay Rassoul addresses the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting**

On April 23rd, H.E. Foreign Minister Rassoul addressed the NATO-ISAF Foreign Ministers Meeting in Tallinn for the first time in his new role. H.E. expressed his gratitude, along with that of the people and the government, to NATO and ISAF, saying, "It was your support, and other international partners, which made our progress possible." As H.E. Dr. Rassoul's speech centered on security within Afghanistan, he touched on such important themes as the Afghanization of security, reconciliation and reintegration and the National Consultative Peace Jirga's role within, enhanced regional cooperation, and a more ef-

fective international partnership. Furthermore, H.E. the Foreign Minister mentioned that preparations are continuing for the upcoming Kabul Conference, which will be followed by the parliamentary elections in September. Other key areas being addressed within Afghanistan, he mentioned, are the strengthening of governance at the national and sub-national levels and further improvement of the role of civilian engagement.

The full text of H.E. the Minister's speech can be read at <http://www.mfa.gov.af/detail.asp?Lang=e&Cat=1&ContID=1130>

### **New Election Chief named**

Mr. Fazel Ahmad Manawi was named the new head of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) by H.E. President Hamid Karzai in preparation for parliamentary elections in September.

Mr. Manawi served as a member of the commission during last year's Presidential election. He replaces Mr. Azizullah Lodin in his new role.

Five new members of the Electoral Complaints Commission, an election watchdog, were also appointed.

The United Nations has already pledged their support for the upcoming elections.

### **Delegation Visits Hiroshima, signs MOU with UNITAR**

Dr. Ahmad Mushahed, Chairman of the Independent Administrative Re-



form and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), and Dr. Farhad Osmani, Director General of the Afghan Civil Service Institute, visited the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Hiroshima office as honored guests in order to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two institutes.

UNITAR currently conducts a seven-month training program for 25 public officials every year with the support of the governments of Hiroshima Prefecture and Hiroshima City. The agreement, as outlined in the MOU, will double the size of UNITAR's program. Participants each period travel to Hiroshima to learn about the post-conflict reconstruction efforts after 1945.

The delegation visited the Peace Memorial Museum and the A-bomb Dome at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Dr. Mushahed presented a floral offering on behalf of the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan at the Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb Victims. Following the official signing ceremony, Dr. Mushahed met with the Honourable Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki at the Hiroshima Prefectural Government headquarters and then visited Miyajima Island.

### **New Projects launched to help rural citizens**

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) is launching the ambitious Strengthening Health Activities for the Rural Poor (SHARP) project. The World Bank has generously pledged support of US\$22 million from its Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. This will coincide with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development's Rural

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Craft Development Program aimed at increasing employment opportunities and income for rural residents.

Dr. Suraya Dalil, Policy and Planning Deputy Minister and Acting Minister of Public Health, said that her ministry's project would serve to strengthen health activities in the villages of 12 provinces, in particular, in support of "the women and children living in difficult to pass and far located areas of Helmand, Badghees, Farah, Nimroz, Samangan, Balkh, Wardak, Sar-i-Pul, Kapisa, Panjshir, Kabul and Parwan provinces."

**MoPH, UNICEF Sign \$39Million Annual Work Plan**

The Shared Annual Work Plan, a plan developed by the technical teams of the Ministry of Public Health and UNICEF which is aimed at improving maternal care and child health, has received renewed support.

Dr. Suraya Dalil, Policy and Planning Deputy Minister and Acting Minister of Public Health, signed the plan with the UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan, Ms. Catherine Mbengue, calling for a total budget of US\$39 million.

Dr. Dalil vowed that together, the two organizations would dedicate themselves over the next year to providing mothers, children and newborns with required health services including vaccinations, and nutritional support.

This plan will be implemented in all provinces.

**Banks experiencing growth**

After the financial crisis of 2008, Afghan banks have experienced positive progress.

Azizi bank, the second-largest private bank nationwide, looks to turn a profit in 2010 for the first time in its

four-year history. Azizi bank has about 250,000 customers. The bank manages \$370 million and is a crucial source of funding which lubricates private enterprise. Forecasts predict that the bank will make a profit of \$3.5 million to \$4 million this year.

Azizi Bank recently opened a mansion-like, multi-storey white marble headquarters in Kabul.

Among Azizi Bank's most popular products is the "Qismat" account, which complies with Islamic banking laws by not paying interest and instead rewards customers with generous lottery prizes such as cars, property, or cash.

Azizi Bank plans to introduce credit cards within the next two to three months, becoming the first national bank to do so; to start selling mortgages; and to open 15 new branches across the country.

Seventeen banks now operate across the country.

Among the others, Standard Chartered Bank is already making a profit. It serves about 16,000 customers, including Afghan nationals and foreign companies and organizations.

**Telecommunication Operators Launch Afghanistan Telecommunication Operators' Association**

National telecommunications operators across the nation (Afghan Telecom, Afghan Wireless Communications Company, Etisalat, MTN and Roshan) announced the launch of the Afghanistan Telecommunication Operators' Social Association (ATOSA), a forum through which operators can collectively work together to provide people with high-quality and reliable telecommunications services. The Association will collaborate closely with the government to ensure the continued growth and success of the national telecommunications sector.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark the initiative, H.E. Eng. Amirzia Sangin, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, said "The launch of ATOSA is an important development for the telecommunications sector. The mobile market in Afghanistan is one of the fastest growing in the world. Such growth is predicated on a public-private partnership and framework between the Government of Afghanistan and its private sector partners that should set an example for encouraging investment, private sector participation and ultimately delivery for our citizens in other sectors of the economy."

Today, over 12 million people have access to mobile services compared to 20,000 in 2001; basic tele-



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phone service reaches more than 80% of the population, approximately 23 million people. The telecommunications industry has spurred growth in a number of industries, including the financial, trade, agriculture, health, security and technology sectors.

Since 2001, the industry has created over 100,000 indirect jobs and invested over US \$1.3 billion in building the first national telephone network. The industry is the largest tax paying sector with an estimated US \$500 million paid in taxes, duties and fees since 2003, representing over 10% of all domestically generated government revenues in the same period.

ATOSA will also provide a forum through which operators can constructively raise and address issues of common concern, including security and predictability in the policy environment.

### **Water polo team looks towards 2016**

The national water polo team is preparing for the 2016 Olympics.

Marine Warrant Officer, Jeremy Pisecki, who serves as coach, thought building an Afghan national team would be inspirational as water polo requires grace, speed, strength, endurance and teamwork.

Despite being a landlocked country with few swimming pools, more than 70 would-be players showed up for tryouts at a swimming pool east of Kabul.

The coach aims to raise money to take the team to the U.S. for training and people-to-people diplomacy. "Everybody is interested [in supporting the team], but wants to see the team here first before they jump

on the bandwagon," said US-based director of development Scott McCook. The project organizing the team has registered for non-profit status.

The team has already received approval from the National Olympic Committee to, if able to qualify, represent the nation in the 2016 Olympics.

### **Park proves popular with women**

Another avenue for Afghan women to express their love of peace and knowledge has opened in Kabul. This place, which has taken the form of a women and children's park, is located on the edge of Kabul, complete with swings, benches, flowers and a gazebo.

The park has already become a favorite destination for those wanting a quiet place to meet with friends.

The park is more than just a place to relax; it is a place of opportunity. This space is home to a training center for mothers and daughters. In classrooms overlooking the park, embroidery and organic farming are taught; students pickle tomatoes, bottle jam, and sew with state-of-the-art machines.

The park has been established with the assistance of India's Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

### **Vaccination Week, World Malaria Day launched**

Minister of Public Health Dr. Suraya Dalil, alongside other government and United Nations officials, launched both Vaccination Week, which commences April 24th, and World Malaria Day, which falls on April 25th, at a ceremony in Kabul.

Great strides have been made to expand immunization for vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio, but challenges still remain. "Every year in Afghanistan, an estimated 180,000 infants miss their routine vaccination," said Peter Graaff, the World Health Organization's representative to Afghanistan.

National disease control achievements include stopping the circulation of polio in many districts, increasing pentavalent vaccine coverage from 69% in 2006 to 83% in 2009, and expanding measles coverage from 64% in 2006 to 76% in 2009.

More than 2700 vaccinators are providing immunization services through fixed, outreach and mobile activities nationwide.

This year's World Malaria Day theme is "Counting Malaria Out." Malaria remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality and is a significant public health issue worldwide, Afghanistan being no exception with approximately 400,000 cases reported last year. Over the next 5 years, on the current pace, the northern provinces could well be malaria-free.

## **Upcoming Events & Important Dates**

### **Exhibition of Textiles & Jewelry from Silk Road & Afghan Refugees**

April 28 - May 19  
Gallery Tengu Square, Hiroshima  
082-248-1128  
(closed May 12)

May 20 - June 16  
Gallery Nishimura, Hiroshima  
090-3748-0459  
(closed May 26 & June 9)

## Omar's Kitchen



Each month, Omar will offer a recipe for authentic Afghan food.

### Keema (Ground meat sauce)



#### Ingredients:

- Jalapeno peppers
- 30 ml. Vegetable oil
- 470 ml. finely chopped onions
- 450 g. Ground lamb
- 235 ml. Water
- 6 Tbsp. Tomato paste or 4 large tomatoes
- 4 Cloves garlic minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 bunch Fresh cilantro

#### To cook:

In a frying pan, sauté the onions in vegetable oil until soft.

Add the ground lamb and brown lightly.

Add the water, tomato paste (or just tomatoes), salt, pepper, and jalapeno peppers.

Bring sauce to a boil; simmer until half the sauce evaporates.

Add the garlic and cilantro and cook for another 5 minutes.

Spoon the mixture over rice.

## Language Lesson

There are many languages spoken in Afghanistan, but two are designated as official languages: Pashto and Dari.

English	Pashto	Dari
Please take me to ~	Lotfan ~ to mi yusa.	Lotfan mara ba ~ bibar.
How much is it to ~ ?	Tar ~ pari so akli?	To ~ chand mibary
Can you give me a discount?	Qimati ligh cam kla?	Qimat ra kami arzan kan?
How about 10 Afgani?	Las Afghani singa da(10)?	Chotor ast da(10) Afghani?
How long does it take?	So milato nisi?	Chand diqiqra dar bar khaw had gritt?
It takes about ~	Dree minatanisi ~	See daqiqa ra maigirad ~
Thank you, keep the change.	Pati paisy wakhla.	Tashakur, pooli maida ra balchod bigir.
Hotel	Hotel	Hotel
Street	Kosa	Kocha
Airport	Hawayi Maidan	Maidani tayara
Restaurant	Restaurant	Restaurant
Bank	Bank	Bank

### How to take a taxi in Afghanistan

1. Raise your hand and stop a taxi.
2. Tell the driver where to go and ask the price.
3. If appropriate, negotiate.
4. Pay the driver when you exit the taxi.
5. Tip if you like - this may be done if there was some inconvenience.

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