



July 2009



# Afghan News

## Highlighted Achievements

- 1,700 active health facilities nationwide
- 6.2 million children are attending schools
- Micro finance loans have benefitted nearly 44,000 households
- 80% have access to telecommunications
- Over 90,000 active servicemen in Afghan National Army

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## Latest News

### Preparations for the upcoming Presidential elections continue

Jul 21, 2009

On August 20 people will head to the polls to elect a president and choose the members of their provincial councils in what will be the first Afghan-led electoral process in three decades and second presidential election . The elections will be overseen by the Independent Election Commission and include assistance from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), NATO and the U.S.



In the presidential contest, there are 41 candidates for the country's highest office and 82 candidates for the vice-presidency. There are 3,195 candidates for provincial councils. The number of candidates for both the presidency and the provisional councils increased since the last round of elections in 2004 and 2005. The most dramatic increases have been seen in the number of women running for office, with twice as many vying for the presidency.

There has also been an increase from 2 to 7 women running for vice-president and a 20 percent rise in the number of women seeking seats on provincial councils.

The process of voter registration took place from October 2008 to March 2009, during which an additional 4 million Afghans registered to vote. The voter rolls now total over 16 million Afghans, of which 35 percent are women.

In a press conference on July 20, one month from the election, a UNAMA spokesperson pledged the organization's support to ensure a free, fair and safe process. "Allow me to assure you that there will be no let up on behalf of the international community in underlining the importance of security over the coming weeks so every Afghan who has the constitutional and democratic right to vote is provided with that opportunity on polling day," said Aleem Siddique, UNAMA's spokesperson at a press conference in Kabul.

### MCIT launches second phase of Village Communications Network

Jul 03, 2009

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has entered into its second phase of the already successful village communications network.

The key purpose of launching this pro-

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ject is to cover the villages where the GSM operators cannot extend their services. The project will create jobs for two people in every village, one for each line, for Telephone and Internet. According to the estimate by Afghan Telecom, one thousand villages will be covered by the end of 2009 by this network, thus creating 2000 jobs in total.

The total cost of this project is five million USD paid by the developmental budget of the MCIT. The project has already covered one hundred and two villages over the last six months.

The network was officially inaugurated in a ribbon cutting ceremony by HE Minister Sangin and the CEO of Afghan Telecom.

### **MCIT inaugurates landline digital phones in Jalalabad**

Jul 03, 2009

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) inaugurated the extension of the digital (landline) phones in the city of Jalalabad on June 30, 2009 in a ceremony.

In the new Communications and IT building in Jalalabad, H. E. Minister Sangin, announced that Jalalabad already had five thousand CDMA phones, but the MCIT also wanted residents to have access to internet and digital lines. For this reason, MCIT began the plans for ten thousand new digital lines in 2007. And it is these lines that are now ready.

Minister Sangin praised the people of Ningrhar province for helping the nation restore the security in the province and considered it a key point towards development and other vital projects in the province.

Eng. Gul Ahmad Khan, the CEO of Afghan Telecom, said that the new digital phone lines are not only providing the people with voice com-

munication but also internet access, fax and video conferencing.

According to officials, twenty million USD had been allocated on this project through the developmental budget.



### **MOU on up-coming elections signed with European Commission**

Jul 02, 2009

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the European Commission (EC) have signed a memorandum of understanding for monitoring the upcoming presidential and provincial council elections.

The MOU was signed by Mr. Asadullah Omar, Acting Director of the 4th Political Dept., on behalf of the Foreign Ministry, and the Charge d' Affaires of the EC Representation Office in Kabul.

The EC has committed electoral assistance in the amount of 35 million Euros for up-coming elections. The EC will also dispatch two separate delegations to Afghanistan for monitoring the elections.

The first group, which will comprise seventeen experts, is mandated to observe the campaign process, while the second group, composed of 42 experts, is scheduled to arrive on the 6th of July 2009 and remain in the country until the announcement of the outcome of the elections.

### **Afghanistan is connected to Uzbekistan through Fiber Optics**

Jul 12, 2009

On Thursday July 9, 2009 the country was connected to Uzbekistan by fiber optics. H.E. Deputy Minister Barialai welcomed the Uzbek telecom delegation and thanked them for their efforts to connect the countries. In the future connections will be established with Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia as well as EU states through Uzbekistan.

### **28 new development projects in Ghor**

Jul 01, 2009

Twenty-eight new development projects have been started in Ghor including construction of a 45km rural road, activation of 9 hydro power projects and 3 projects related to the distribution of solar panels.

### **Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Signs 13 DIAG Development Project Contracts**

Jul 12, 2009

The Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development signed 13 DIAG development project contracts worth approximately \$1.66 million USD with private construction companies. The projects will include the construction of such infrastructure as social and cultural centers, basic health centers, bridges, tractors, etc.



### **Six development projects inaugurated in Paktiya**

Jul 15, 2009

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The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development completed work on 6 development projects that included 264 meters of retaining wall and 323 meters of canals and intakes. The projects were implemented in the districts of Samkani, Saied Karam, Leja Mangal, and Zazi Ariub. 31,000 families will benefit from the facilities.

**MoPH sends 3 medical teams to Badakhshan**

Jul 17, 2009

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) sent 3 teams of well-supplied medical specialists to the Khahan, Darwaz and Nusai districts of Badakhshan. These teams are working towards a new system of care instead of the old system that required supplying the districts through Tajikistan.

Dr.Fatimie, the Minister of Public Health, said that the teams would provide medical services to the people and refer those cases necessary to Kabul.

**Upcoming Events & Important Dates**

**August 6-18:**

Winds from Afghanistan Photo Exhibition. Osaka-fu, Moriguchi, Kawaracho 8-3.  
Tel: 06 (6994) 1313

**August 6-18:**

Kazuya Ito—Afghanistan Photo Exhibition. Shizuoka-ken, Aoi-ku, Shichikencho 8-20.  
Tel: 05 (4255) 7357

**August 19:**

Afghan National Day



**Omar's Kitchen**

Each month, the Embassy's Chef, Omar, will offer a recipe for authentic Afghan food.

**Burani Banjan**

**Ingredients (for 6 people):**

- 4 medium eggplants (slice in 1 cm circles; spread on a plate and lightly sprinkle with salt; leave for 30 min.);
- vegetable or olive oil;
- 2 medium onions (thinly sliced);
- 1 green pepper (sliced in thin circles);
- 2 large ripe tomatoes (peeled and sliced);
- 1/4 cup water;
- Mix of 100 grams of yogurt and 50 grams of sour cream;
- 1/2 teaspoon of minced garlic with a pinch of salt;
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt;
- Pinch of black pepper;
- Pinch of dry, crushed mint.

**To cook:**

- Pour oil into skillet with a lid;
- Fry eggplant at medium heat until lightly browned on both sides (add more oil as needed);
- Place sautéed pieces on a plate covered with paper towel (to absorb excess oil).
- In the same pan, add onions and sauté until translucent;
- Add tomatoes and green pepper, a pinch of salt, 1/2 teaspoon of garlic, and a pinch of black pepper;
- Add the eggplant, pour in water and let simmer gently for 15 minutes with cover on.

**To serve:**

- Lightly spread yogurt mix on a plate;
- Place cooked eggplant with sauce onto the plate;
- Spread more yogurt sauce on top;
- Sprinkle dry crushed mint on top.
- Eat with baked flat bread.



## Interview with Mahmud Khalili

*A recent play about Afghanistan, based on accounts of many personal stories, entitled "The Crossroads Country," played to roughly 1,000 people in Tokyo. Mr. Mahmud Khalili, the son of one of the true-life figures, Masood Khalili, heard about the play and sent positive feedback. We interviewed Mahmud on his life and his family since the period covered in the play.*

**Q. How did your family end up in the U.S.?**

My father's side is Khalili and my mother's is Nooristani. We left Afghanistan because if we had not, the Soviets would have killed all the men. This was because we were either in the military or in Government and at high levels. My mother's father and all his brothers were lined up and assassinated by the Red Army. We moved to all corners of the world. We owe a lot to America because all that was asked of us was to obey the laws and pay the taxes and that is it. The people we consider family (aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on and so forth) are probably at about 200 strong in America. I was the first of our family to be born in America and that in New Jersey for that matter! I am proud of this. I still remember the pledge of allegiance and voted for the first time for President Obama.

**Q. Do you have much family in Afghanistan now?**

Yes, we have many aunts and uncles and cousins that either never left or became refugees in neighboring countries and have now gone back. I try to go back every 6 months or so. The first time I went was when I was 16 and the civil war was going on and Hekmatyar was bombing the capital city of Kabul. That was when I met Commander Masood for the second time. He was a great man. The world lost a legend when we

lost him.

**Q. What is the Khalili family up to these days?**

My father, Masood Khalili is the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Turkey and still a political leader in Afghanistan itself. I am currently starting a few websites about Afghanistan and my family and I are business managers for two companies in Kabul. Sohaillah Khalili, my mother, is an artist whose style is abstract. She is one of the few Muslims that works with abstract calligraphy. The middle brother, Majdood Khalili, is finishing up a degree in English Literature and the youngest, Mansoor Khalili, is finishing up a degree in Persian Literature. So to sum it all up...the Khalili family is doing well.

**Q. You come from an interesting lineage. What personal mark do you hope to make?**

My role models are Commander Masood and my father. They have been an inspiration to millions and I am blessed to come from a family like this one. Through politics or my own business ventures, I hope to make peoples' lives better. Hopefully when they lay me on my death bed, people will look at my history and see that I have helped my people to the extent I could. I have lived the life of a king, I think its time I give back and to whom better than my own. America does not need my help but Afghanistan does.

**Q. Do you have any personal connection to Japan?**

I remember a Mr. Takahashi when I was growing up. He still works for the Japanese Foreign Ministry I believe. He is good friends with my father and came to see him when he was almost killed when Commander Masood was assassinated. He is a very nice man. My mother's close

friend is named Deniz, she is Japanese and I recall that my mother has some kind of Japanese sister as well. A symbolic sisterhood of sorts."

**Q. What do you think young people worldwide can do to support Afghanistan?**

I think young Afghans around the world are trying their best to do what they can by starting NGOs and holding charity events and keeping their heritage alive in the way they act and talk and live their lives. I think that the Afghan government could do more by promoting Afghanistan more. By sending as many young Afghans abroad to learn in order to come back and make something of themselves. They can promote Afghanistan by having the embassies put on charity events, debates, knowledge based forums to get Non-Afghans thinking about Afghanistan. Unless the people of a country actively want to help the people of another, it will be very hard to make it so.



## Language Lesson

There are many languages spoken in Afghanistan, but two are designated as the nation's official languages: Dari and Pashto. For audio samples of the vocabulary and phrases, please go to:  
<http://www.afghanembassyjp.com/en/life/?pn=187>

English	Dari	Pashto
Hello	Salaam	As salaam alaikom
Good-bye	Khoda hafez	De khodae paman
How are you?	Chi hal dared?	Tsuenga ye?
Fine, thank you	Khob, tashakor	Za kha yam
And you?	Shomu chitorasten?	Te Tsuenga ye?
Yes	Bale	Ho
No	Nakhaer	Na

### Conversation

#### Dari

- A) Salaam. Chetorasten? (Hello. How are you?)  
 B) Khob, tashakor. Shmu chitorasten? (Fine, thank you. And you?)  
 A) Khob. Tashakor. (Fine, thank you.)

#### Pashto

- A) Salam alaikom? Tsuenga yei? (Hello. How are you?)  
 B) Kheyam manana. Te tsuenga yei? (Fine, thank you. And you?)  
 A) Ze ham khe yam manana. (Fine, thank you.)

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