

# Afghans First



## India at Work in Afghanistan



# Contents

■ India's Assistance to Afghanistan: At a Glance	1
■ Afghans First: India at Work in Afghanistan	11
■ Back on the Road	12
■ Body and Soul	18
■ Helping HABIBIA	22
■ Airborne Again	26
■ Industrial Power	30
■ Language is the Key	36
■ Sharing Heritage	40
■ Connecting People	44
■ Money Matters	48
■ Power to Kabul	52
■ Showtime Folks	56
■ Logged In	60

# India's Assistance to Afghanistan: At a Glance

## Financial Assistance:

- ◆ India had, in January 2002, announced an assistance of US\$ 100 million for Afghanistan. Of this assistance, US\$ 31.5 m were utilised during 2002-03 and US\$ 53.5 m have been operationalised/ committed on specific projects approved and commenced during 2003-04 (details below).
- ◆ The Government of India has further approved Rs. 377.47 crores (aprox. US\$ 84 m over and above US\$ 100 m) for upgradation/ reconstruction of the road from Zaranj to Delaram in Afghanistan.
- ◆ India is contributing US \$ 200,000 per annum to the World Bank managed Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund.
- ◆ India has announced food assistance of 1 m tons of wheat (US\$ 100m) to Afghanistan. A part of this assistance (85517 tons of wheat) was converted into high protein biscuits (9526 tons) and sent to Afghanistan for its School Feeding Programme from November 2002 to June 2003. The deliveries of the second tranche of high protein biscuits (7496 tons) against 76521 tons of wheat have commenced in December 2003. As a result, 972,000 Afghan children are receiving a package of 100 gms of biscuits every day.
- ◆ India has decided to gift 300 vehicles to the Afghan National Army. Of these 66 vehicles have been delivered, 49 are in the process of despatch and another 120 vehicles will be delivered between April to July 2004.
- ◆ In addition, the Indian Government is also providing scholarships to Afghan students for higher education and training Afghan nationals in various fields in India under its regular schemes/ programmes.

## Details of Assistance provided since November 2001:

### Aid to Afghan Budget

- ◆ US \$ 10 m were transferred to the account of the Afghan Government in July 2002 as cash subsidy to the Afghan budget
- ◆ US\$ 200,000 have been paid to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund per annum in 2002 and 2003.

### Humanitarian Assistance

- ◆ Winter clothing were sent to provide immediate humanitarian relief in November-December 2001. Two more consignments of around 34 tons of winter clothing were sent in February and December 2003.
- ◆ A consignment of 20,000 blankets was sent to Herat in February 2002.
- ◆ Earthquake relief consisting of 200 tents, 10000 blankets, and nearly 10 tons of medicines were delivered to Afghanistan in April 2002.

### Health

- ◆ The reconstruction of Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health in Kabul has commenced in September 2003.
- ◆ A team of 13 Indian doctors and paramedics is working in Kabul since November 2001. The team is attending to hundreds of patients daily and disbursing medicines at the polyclinic (OPD) of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH). The Indian Medical team is also running an operation theatre at the Koh-e-Markaz Hospital in Kabul.

- ◆ A 6-member team of Indian doctors and paramedics is running an operation theatre at the Civil Hospital in Mazar-e-Sharif since April 2002.
- ◆ A 4-member team of Indian doctors and paramedics has started its work in Herat on April 12, 2003.
- ◆ A 4-member team of Indian doctors and paramedics is working in Shebargan since end-May, 2003.
- ◆ A 4-member team of Indian doctors and paramedics has started its work in Kandahar in September 2003.
- ◆ More than 260 tons of medicines, medical instruments and equipment have been sent to Afghanistan since November 2001.
- ◆ An artificial limb/ Jaipur foot fitment camp was set up for Afghan amputees at Kabul military hospital in January 2002. Nearly 1000 artificial limbs were fitted during the camp. Another artificial limb fitment camp was set up from October 21 to December 4, 2002 at Mazar-e-Sharif and Meymaneh where 600 artificial limbs were fitted. During the camp, training was also provided to eight local artisans on artificial limb maintenance. On conclusion of the camp, the fitment centre alongwith tools, machinery and raw materials was handed over to the Afghan authorities in Mazar-e-Sharif and named as Indo-Afghan Rehabilitation Centre. A large number of rehabilitation aids like wheel chairs, crutches, hearing aids, audiometers were also gifted.
- ◆ Two batches of six Afghan doctors and paramedics each, from Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health attended training in areas of their specialisation at All India Institute of Medical Sciences from August 19 to November 18, 2002, and May 29 to August 27, 2003 respectively. Extension was provided to one of the trainees of the first batch for advanced training of three months.
- ◆ Four artisans from Indo-Afghan Rehabilitation Centre in Mazar-e-Sharif were provided training in the field of fabrication of prosthesis and orthosis and management of limb fitment centre from December 2003 to February 2004 by ALIMCO at Kanpur.

### **Civil Aviation (Aircrafts, Spares and Services)**

- ◆ The Indian Government has gifted three airbus aircrafts, along with essential spares including two engines, and services including crew support to the Ariana Afghan Airlines. The first two aircrafts were handed over in September and December 2002 and the third aircraft in March 2003.
- ◆ 51 Ariana Afghan Airlines officials have been trained by Air India.
- ◆ Flight Engineers Ground Basic Classroom Training was provided to 8 officials of Ariana Afghan Airlines at the Indian Airlines Training Centre, Hyderabad for a period of six weeks in September-October, 2003.

### **Transport**

- ◆ The Indian Government has gifted 274 buses to the Afghan Government for its public transport system. Of these, most of the buses are operating in Kabul city, 25 in Kandahar and 25 in Herat. Small numbers of buses are also operating in other cities.

### **Food Aid**

- ◆ 9526 tons of fortified biscuits have been supplied for School Feeding Programme in Afghanistan from November 2002 to June 2003. The deliveries of the second tranche of high protein biscuits (7496 tons) to Afghanistan have commenced in December 2003. As a result, 972,000 Afghan children are receiving a package of 100 gms of biscuits every day.



## Education

- ◆ The reconstruction of Habibia School has commenced in September 2003.
- ◆ One/two English language Instructors are teaching English at the Institute of Diplomacy since Feb 2002 to the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Government Departments of Afghanistan.
- ◆ Two additional English language teachers are teaching English at the Ministries of Information & Culture and Labour & Social Welfare since March 10, 2003.
- ◆ 8646 educational kits were gifted to the students of Habibia School in Kabul in Aug-Sept 2002.
- ◆ The Indian Government has gifted 20,000 desk-cum-benches for schools in Afghanistan.
- ◆ In-service training was provided to seven Afghan teachers from the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan by Delhi Public School Society from September 4 to October 15, 2003. The second batch of 20 Afghan teachers has commenced its training for a period of three months by Delhi Public School Society on February 5, 2004.
- ◆ Fifty slots have been allocated to Afghanistan for training at various institutes in India under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme. 43 Afghan nationals have attended the training under the Programme during 2002-03 in the fields of Rural Industry Promotion (3), Training Methods & Skills for Managers (4), Small Business Planning & Promotion (7), Urban Development Management (4), Audit of Receipts (3), Legislative Drafting (5), Development Journalism (1), Audit of Public Enterprises (1), Participatory Planning and Management of Watershed Projects (5), Micro Planning for Poverty Reduction & Sustainable Development (3), Sustainable Development in Agriculture & Rural Development (2), Educational Planning and Administration (4) and Urban Infrastructure Planning & Management (1).
- ◆ 10 slots were allocated to Afghanistan under the General Cultural Scholarship Scheme of Indian Council of Cultural Relations for higher studies in India in 2002-03, of which three have been utilised by Afghanistan (one each at School of Architecture and Planning, Delhi University and Osmania University, Hyderabad). 4 slots have been allocated to Afghanistan under the scheme for 2003-04.
- ◆ 10 slots have been allocated to Afghanistan under the Cultural Exchange Programme Scholarship Scheme for 2003-04.

## Diplomacy

- ◆ Three batches of 20 Afghan Diplomats each have been trained at the Foreign Service Institute in February-May 2002, August-November 2002 and July-September 2003.
- ◆ 15 officials from Presidential Secretariat of Afghanistan were trained at Foreign Service Institute from October 2002 to March 2003.
- ◆ Two Afghan diplomats attended a two-week module on Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats in January 2003.

## Culture, Heritage, Media, Sport

- ◆ Work has commenced on the following projects in September 2003.
  - ❑ Setting up of a modern Offset Printing Machine along with DTP Facility
  - ❑ Setting up of a new 100 kw SW transmitter
  - ❑ Setting up of TV Satellite Uplinking/Downlinking facility.

- ◆ A consignment of musical instruments was gifted to the Afghan Radio and Television in February 2002. Another consignment of musical instruments was gifted to Kabul University in April 2003. And a third consignment of musical instruments was gifted to the Ceremonial Band of the Presidential Guard of Afghanistan in June 2003.
- ◆ US \$ 20,000 were donated for the repair of Hazrat Ali Shrine in Mazar-e-Sharif in September 2002.
- ◆ Two batches of 15 Afghan journalists each and a third batch of 19 Afghan journalists have been trained at Indian Institute of Mass Communication from August to October, 2002, January to March, 2003 and June to August, 2003 respectively.
- ◆ Two choreographers were sent from Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) for a period of two weeks in April, 2003 for assisting Afghan authorities in producing programmes for national day celebrations on April 28, 2003.
- ◆ ICCR has allocated two slots to Afghanistan for learning music in India during 2002-03, of which one has been utilised by Afghanistan.

## Security and Rule of Law

### **Afghan National Army**

- ◆ The Indian Government has decided to gift 300 vehicles to the Afghan National Army. Of these 66 vehicles have been delivered, 49 are in the process of despatch and another 120 vehicles will be delivered between April to July 2004.

### **Police**

- ◆ Training was imparted to 250 Afghan police officers and cadets in twelve different courses in India from July to September 2002.

### **Judiciary**

- ◆ Eighteen Afghan judges and lawyers were trained at the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi from February to May, 2003.

### **Constitutional Loya Jirga**

- ◆ Sixty five electronic voting machines were made available to United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan for voting during the Constitutional Loya Jirga in December 2003 alongwith deputation of two experts for operation and technical support.

## Agriculture

- ◆ Nearly 67 tons of vegetable seeds were supplied to the Ministry of Agriculture of Afghanistan in three Phases in August-September 2002, February 2003 and August 2003.
- ◆ 15 officials from the Ministry of Agriculture have attended a training course in the field of Cooperative Farming and Marketing at RICM, Bangalore from December 2002 to March 2003.
- ◆ 16 officials from the Ministry of Agriculture have attended a training course on Operation & Maintenance of Agricultural Machinery and Equipment at CFMTTI, Budni, Bhopal from January to May, 2003.
- ◆ A sericulture expert was deputed to Afghanistan for a period of one week (July 14-20, 2003) to suggest possible areas of co-operation and assistance to Afghanistan in the field of sericulture.

## Information Technology

- ◆ An IT & telecom specialist has been deputed to the Afghan Government since June 20, 2003 for a period of one year.
- ◆ A LAN network with Internet access via VSAT was established alongwith supply of necessary equipment in the office of the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan. The LAN has been extended to additional twenty nodes alongwith supply of necessary equipment.
- ◆ A Computer Training Centre was set up in Kabul from July 02 to Jan 03 for providing computer training to Afghan officials. The centre was handed over to the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 2003.
- ◆ Two Computer Training Centres have been set up in Kandahar and Herat in August 2003.
- ◆ Another two Computer Training Centres have been set up at Pul-e-Khumri and Jalalabad in November, 2003.

## Banking

- ◆ Three experts from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) were deputed to assist the Da Afghanistan Bank in July 2002.
- ◆ Six experts from various banks in India have been deputed to the Da Afghanistan Bank from July-August 2003 for a period of one year.

## Commerce

- ◆ A Preferential Trade Agreement was signed between India and Afghanistan on March 6, 2003 that came into effect in May 2003. The Agreement provides duty-free access to the import of fig-dried, pistachio (open and closed shell), mulberries dried, pine nuts roasted, melon fresh, asafoetida, lapis lazuli, ruby, and emeralds from Afghanistan. A 50% concession has been extended on duty on green, black and red raisins, apricots dried, walnuts, plums dried, almonds, raisins golden, cherries sour dried, fresh grapes, apples, apricots, pomegranates, anise seeds, caraway seeds, linseeds, sesame seeds, liquorice roots, apricot nuts bitter, and alpha alpha seeds.
- ◆ The construction of a cold storage of 5000-ton capacity in Kandahar has commenced.
- ◆ A training programme and workshop on marketing and enterprise development was organised for twenty Afghan women entrepreneurs by Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs of India in November 2003.

## Urban Development

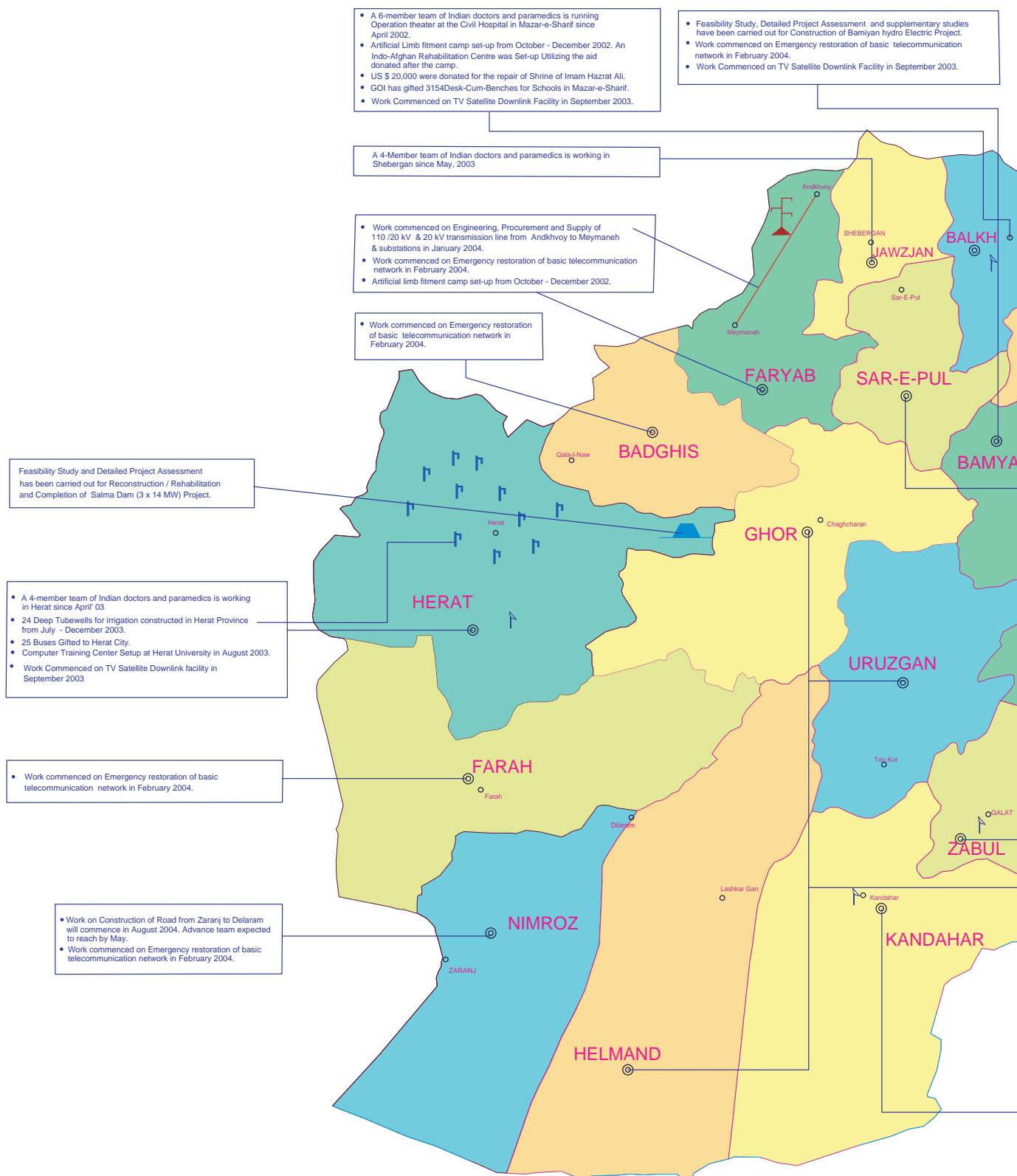
- ◆ Civil engineering lab equipment and measuring instruments were gifted to the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing of Afghanistan in May 2003.
- ◆ The Government has decided to gift 101 utility vehicles/ equipments (water tankers, rear drop tippers, dump trucks, bulldozers, motor graders and garbage tippers) to the Kabul Municipality. 75 vehicles/ equipments have been handed over to the Kabul Municipality and another 26 vehicles will be handed over by July 2004.

## Infrastructure Development

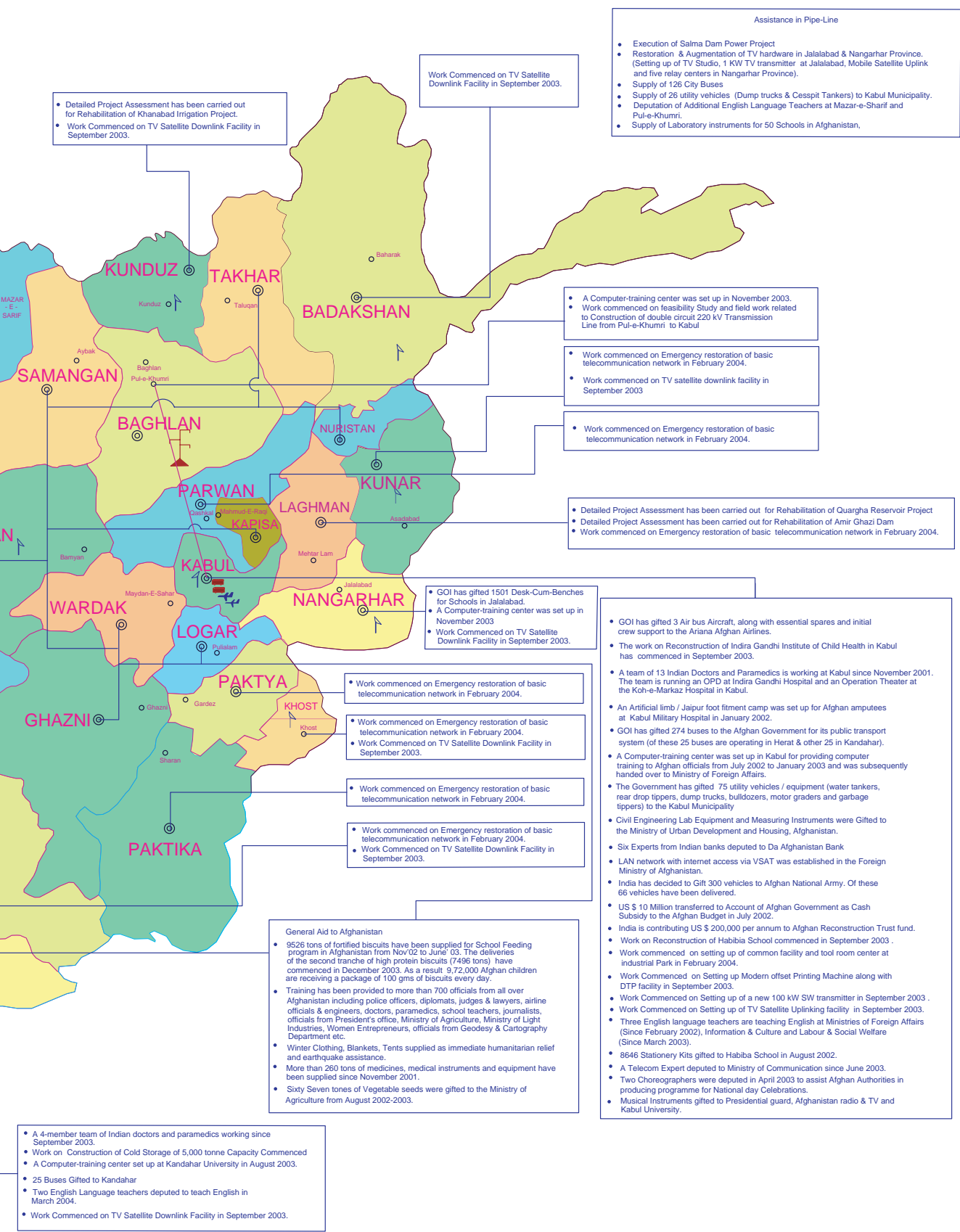
### Road Construction

- ◆ The Indian Government has approved construction of road from Delaram to Zaranj in Afghanistan. The work is expected to commence by August 2004.

# INDIA'S ASSISTANCE



# TO AFGHANISTAN





## **Water Resources**

- ◆ Detailed project assessment has been carried out for rehabilitation of six mini/micro hydro projects, Khanabad Irrigation Project, Quargha Reservoir and Amir Ghazi Dam in Afghanistan.
- ◆ The work of drilling of 24 deep wells for irrigation in Herat province commenced in September 2003 and was completed in December 2003. The project was executed after conducting a field survey and water quality analysis at 100 locations.
- ◆ Pre-feasibility study and detailed project assessment (March- August 2003) have been carried out for completion of balance work of Salma Dam Power Project in Herat Province.
- ◆ Additional supplementary studies (power evacuation, environment impact assessment and socio-economic study) have been carried out for Bamiyan (Ayangaran) micro hydel project.

## **Industry**

- ◆ Work has commenced on the setting up of a common facility and tool room centre at Industrial Park in Kabul in February 2004.
- ◆ Two batches of twenty officials each from the Ministry of Light Industries and Foodstuff of Afghanistan have attended training in the field of light industry at National Institute of Small Industries Extension Training (NISJET), Hyderabad from October to December 2003 and January to March, 2004 respectively.

## **Power**

- ◆ Work has commenced on the engineering, procurement and supply of 110/20 kV substations (3 Nos.), material for 110 kV & 20 kV Andhkvoy to Meymaneh (125 km) transmission line and the equipment for 4 Nos. 20/0.4 kV pole mounted substations in Faryab Province in January 2004.
- ◆ Work has been completed on the feasibility study, and part of the fieldwork relating to the detailed survey and soil investigations for the construction of a double circuit transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul and substation at Kabul in Afghanistan.

## **Tele-Communications**

- ◆ Work has commenced on the emergency restoration of basic telecommunication network in eleven provincial capitals in Afghanistan in February 2004.

## **Geodesy and Cartography**

- ◆ Six officials from the Geodesy and Cartography Department of Afghanistan have commenced training for a period of 13 weeks in Geodetic Surveys at the Survey Training Institute, Hyderabad on January 22, 2004.
- ◆ Six officials from the Geodesy and Cartography Department of Afghanistan attended training in the field of GIS Applications at the Survey Training Institute, Hyderabad from February 12-March 17, 2004.
- ◆ Three officials from the Geodesy and Cartography Department of Afghanistan have commenced training for a period of 10 weeks in Photogrammetric Operator Course at the Survey Training Institute, Hyderabad on February 12, 2004.

## **Training**

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- ◆ Indian Council of Cultural Relations has allocated two slots to Afghanistan for learning music in India during 2002-03, of which one has been utilised by Afghanistan.

## Afghans First: India at Work in Afghanistan

At Bakhtar Cinema in downtown Kabul, an Indian film – Ghayal, is into its last reel. Action hero Sunny Deol is beating the living daylights out of bad man Danny Dengzongapa. Every punch lands with a roar of approval from the audience and claps welcome every abuse hurled at poor Danny.

India is right there in the middle of Afghans, entertaining them, helping them and walking with them. For us, Afghanistan is not an arena for the Great Game to resume – it's a country we have known, cared for and loved longer than any of us cares to remember.

Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore wrote a short story in 1892 about a homesick Pathan in India and his love for a little Bengali girl who reminded him of his daughter back in Kabul. The story was later made into a film, which is still sometimes shown in Indian theatres.

So, when it was time to help rebuild Afghanistan, India did not wait for anyone. Six doctors and seven paramedics were dispatched to the Indira Gandhi hospital for children even before the war against the Taliban was over and Chairman Hamid Karzai took over as head of the Interim Administration.

As their families worried about them in India, these doctors got down to work. That was in November 2001. Special planes brought medicines from India, and still do. Today, the Indian doctors at the hospital handle more than 500 patients every day.

Over the intervening period, India unravelled a comprehensive \$100-million assistance package for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, touching every aspect of life there: education, health, administration, defense and economy.

When President Hamid Karzai asked India if something could be done about his old school, Habibia, India said yes immediately. Work is now underway in full swing. The war-ravaged walls have been stripped for a fresh coat of plaster and paint and the classrooms will get a completely new look.

Habibia is Afghanistan's premier school (and its biggest - with enrollment standing at 13,000); its students include President Karzai and Baba-e-Millat Zahir Shah. Its principal, Sayed Naasir Askarzada, is quite pleased with the progress.

An Afghan official, Ahmad Nabizada, says, "I see Indian buses every day and I see Indian planes every day."

The 274 Indian buses in Afghanistan have breathed new life into the country's public transport system – each carrying 2000 persons a day. After the war, Kabul was left with some 50 old and damaged buses – way short of the demand. Buses from India closed that gap substantially.

Dr Mohayeddin Shams, director of the foreign ministry's institute of diplomacy, says, "Every time I see an Indian bus, I am reminded of the deep friendship between our two countries." For him these buses are symbolic of the "historical ties" between Afghanistan and India.

India's assistance to Afghanistan is driven by a deep and abiding commitment that can be described simply in two words: Afghans First.

Back on the ROAD



To work and on





time



Unlike many Afghans, Shadab has a job. But he nearly lost it when he was unable to reach work on time, day after day. No matter how hard he tried. However, for many months now, he has never been late.

A bus gifted by India is just a few minutes away, always, ready to reach him anywhere he wants to go. In fact, Afghans all over the country can now actually reach destinations, and much sooner, because of 274 such buses India gave Afghanistan as part of the assistance committed to the reconstruction effort.

Most of these buses were kept in Kabul and the rest were sent to the provinces.

With the TATAs and the Ashok Leylands, Kabul's Millie buses are back in business.

Most of Kabul's buses were either old or crippled by negligence or destroyed in war. The remaining buses were never enough. They ran overloaded – packed to many times beyond capacity – and famously late.

"You could have to wait for anywhere between 45 minutes to an hour for a bus," Shadab says. Many a time, he remembered hopping into a shared-cab. They could be expensive but at least they had you moving.

Najifullah, a former Afghan army soldier, says, "You can't imagine how much help are these strong and big buses." Waiting for a bus in a busy commercial district of Kabul with his sister-in-law, he added, "The new model is a great help."



Indian buses have been around for a while in Afghanistan. The junkyard at the Mohammad Khan bus depot is full of bullet-riddled, wasting buses. Most of them were bought from India before the Taliban took charge.

In the war preceding Taliban takeover and fall, Kabul's fleet of buses took a huge hit, including the Indian buses. In late 2001, just after the fall of the Taliban regime, the depot had only 50 buses. Kabul came to a standstill.

The cabs moved in, but the fares shot up. The ordinary Kabuli was left with just two options: one, walk it; two, match fares driven up by foreigners.

Now that's history. Shadab has to be patient now for just about five minutes for the next bus. He is almost never late for work now.

## Vehicles for the army

For the cash-strapped national army, every wheel and every battery matters. And India is helping the new army, whose birth and raising has been one of the biggest concerns of the international community, stand on its own feet, rather, move on its own wheels.

Last December, India gave the army forty 2.5-tonner troop carriers. They reached Afghanistan after a 6,000-km journey that began in Jamshedpur. They were put on ships in Mumbai, unloaded in Bandar Abbas in Iran and then brought by road to Kabul.







The whole process took about 25 days.

Brigadier Sardar Aka, the man commanding the Technical Training Centre in Kabul, is very impressed by the 2.5 tonners. "They are very comfortable and very easily manoeuvrable."

The two senior officers then proceeded to join the troops being trained by an engineer sent here by the Indian manufacturer. They are hanging on to every word of the engineer on how best to keep the truck running.

"When driving through a jungle," says Ashish Kumar, the Indian company representative here, "you can dodge the enemy by switching off the headlights and turning on these small lights that will be visible only to the vehicle behind yours."

The troops peer closely over Ashish's shoulders at the two small lights at the back of the truck. The training will continue for a while, and the officers get back to their heated cabins to talk about what more India can do.

"We have 12 engineers we want India to train," says Brigadier Aka. He plans to ask the Indian company to take some of these engineers to India for a more intensive round of training.

Apart from these 2.5 tonners and the jeeps expected in June, the Afghanistan National Army is also getting some field ambulances.

## **Interview:** **Syed Mohammad Ali Jawad** **Transport minister**



### ***Have the Indian buses been any help?***

India has fulfilled its promises as a donor country. In the transport sector it has been a great help.

### ***How useful are the buses?***

We were down to 45 or 50 old buses after the war. The 274 buses sent by India have considerably helped us carry more people. Around 2000 passengers are carried by each of these buses every day – to work or to the market.

People also know these buses have come from India, reminds them of the friendship between our two countries.

### ***Some people say the buses are the most important and visible sign of the friendship between the two countries!***

Yes they are. As I told you, every time any one sees any of these buses, they are reminded of the friendship between the two countries.

### ***How does Indian assistance compare with that of other countries?***

India has given us the largest number of buses.

### ***Would you like India to help with other modes of transport such as metro rail, railways?***

Yes, of course. We want everything that is good and useful. We need metros and railways.





# BODY and SOUL



Keeping them



healthy and fit





Taraana, the youngest of five sisters, collapsed one night in October 2001 during a bombing run on Kabul by US planes. A bomb fell in her neighbourhood, a few houses away. She never recovered.

Doctors say she is a victim of psychosomatic trauma. She is 13 now, but looks not a day older than nine. Taraana eats only after cajoling, stays home mostly and reads with the book pressed closed to her face.

She is being treated by Dr Ram Shankar, one of six doctors of the Indian Medical Mission that has been providing free treatment – examination and medicines – since November 2001, soon after the fall of the Taliban regime.

"We may have to give her hormone shots," says Dr Shankar. While the mission has a ready supply of medicines for routine ailments, it doesn't hesitate to requisition from India special drugs needed for treating patients like Taraana.

Dr Shankar, a general surgeon, works at a hospital in Kabul. He conducts major or minor surgeries at what is perhaps the best operation theatre in Afghanistan.

Also covered by the Indian reconstruction assistance is a children's hospital, built many years ago by the Indian government and named after one of its prime ministers, Indira Gandhi.

When the mission first started this wing, it was more like reviving a dying person. It was in a state of complete disrepair. It did not have enough doctors and its dispensary was just a forgotten room.

Now the pediatric wing gets almost 500 patients a day – a burly hospital staff strives to keep the order – many of them coming from outlying provinces of Afghanistan.

Ghulam Hazrat has come from Takhar after local doctors failed to cure his daughter's incessant coughing and chest problems. Why don't you try the Indians, he was told. And why not, he headed for Kabul.

"I am not here for the free medicines," he said. Ghulam can afford the medicines. It's the doctors he has come to see.

Mohsina, on the other hand, needs the free medicines the Indian mission gives away – worth US \$300,000 every six months.

Dr Arun Kumar finds the attention flattering, but the ultimate reward for him, he says, is the satisfaction of helping so many people in such a short time.

## What else is India doing on health

- ♦ Indian doctors and paramedics are working in Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Shebergan and Kandahar.
- ♦ Artificial limb/Jaipur foot fitment camps and distribution of such as wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids and audiometres.
- ♦ Afghan doctors have trained at India's premier high-speciality All India Institute of Medical Sciences.



- ♦ The Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health is being repaired and renovated.
- ♦ Completing a three-storey surgical block that was left half-constructed in 1992.
- ♦ Finishing the construction work on a single-storey but sprawling polyclinic block.
- ♦ Putting up an electric substation for the hospital
- ♦ Fixing the broken boundary wall.

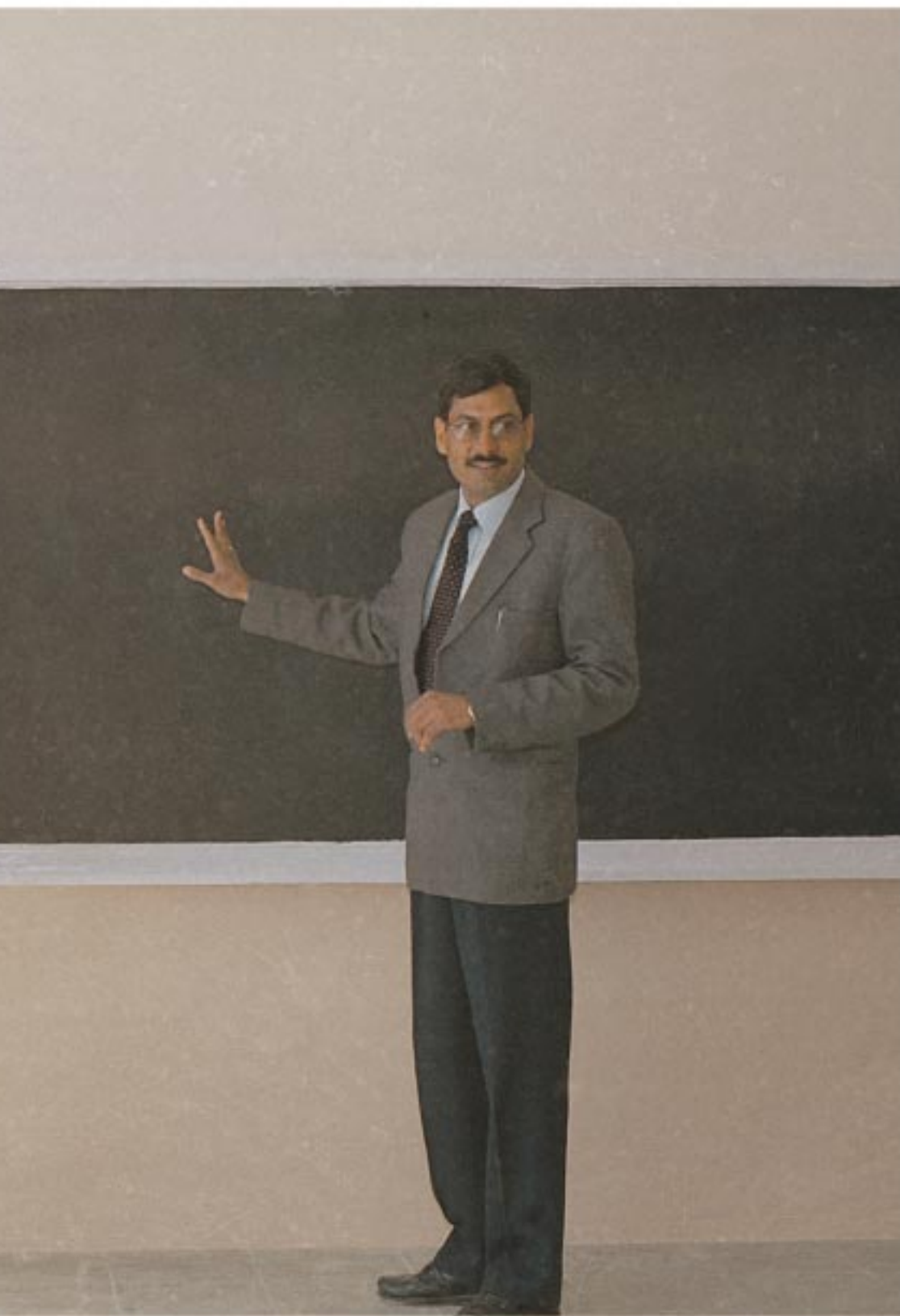


# Helping HABIBIA



Repairing war -





damaged school



England has Eton and Afghanistan has Habibia. You may not believe this if you were standing outside the school now. It's just a sprawling reminder of the torturous civil war that put the country back by several decades.

But once its multi-million-dollar makeover is over, the 100-year-old school will look the part too. India is spending over US \$ 5 million on its restoration as part of the reconstruction assistance committed to Afghanistan in 2002.

The Indian reconstruction team says it will be something its former students - Baba-e-Millat Zahir Shah, President Hamid Karzai and Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani – will be proud of and present students will love.

Thirteen thousand students are enrolled at the mammoth four-storey school, which has over 300 teachers and more than 70 classrooms. From the outside, the school looks like a building used for target practice by anyone with a gun or a rocket launcher.

The Taliban killed its soul and discontinued teaching of science. They also fired its highly respected principal, Sayed Naasir Askarzada.

He is back now and constantly pushing the Indian engineers to finish fast so that he can get on with the task of teaching. When completed, the school will have central heating, power back up, and marble cover for walls in the corridors and classrooms.

Naasir likes the sample classroom that stands in a corner, in complete contrast to the rest of the building, which is being



stripped down for an all-new interior and exterior. Indian engineers have until August to finish work and leave.

## The Habibia school in figures

- ◆ The complex sprawls over 100,000 square metres
- ◆ The school building itself covers 15,000 square metres
- ◆ It has 73 classrooms including laboratories
- ◆ 13,000 students attend this school, in two shifts
- ◆ They are taught by approximately 300 teachers

## What is being done to the school

- ◆ All damaged structural elements being repaired
- ◆ Re-plastering of the entire building
- ◆ New flooring
- ◆ Marble walls in the corridors
- ◆ Renovating the public conveniences
- ◆ Repairing the roof
- ◆ New aluminum windows with GI sheets
- ◆ New doors for all rooms
- ◆ The main entrance and the reception will be a fusion of Indian and Afghan architecture
- ◆ New electric substation with transformers and power back-up with generators in acoustic enclosures
- ◆ New central heating for the whole building
- ◆ New furniture and new labs with all the necessary equipment and facilities
- ◆ Computer room with computers.



## Interview: Sayed Naasir Askarzada Principal



### ***Your school is in a very bad shape?***

Yes, it was very badly damaged during the war (the 10-year civil war). Though it

remained operational through the Taliban years, no repair work was undertaken. But the school was not the same – because of dress restrictions and the fact that no science subjects were taught.

### ***How do you feel about India helping in its renovation?***

This school's India connection goes way back to 100 years ago. It was established by the Indian government (the colonial government). In fact, the first principal was an Indian. And it's India again, which is helping the school.

### ***How soon do you expect the school to ready for use, all of it?***

We expect the Indian engineers to finish the renovation work in six months

### ***Is the renovation work to your liking?***

Yes very much. There is a sample classroom the engineers have made and it's quite good. I like it.



# AIRBORNE again



## Ariana Afghan



# Airlines



Like much of Afghanistan, Ariana Afghan Airlines nearly didn't make it, coming out of the war with a severely depleted fleet. Getting it back up in the air needed a major life-saving procedure.

Around the same time India's domestic carrier Indian Airlines was negotiating with the country's international airlines Air-India for three of latter's aircraft. The government of India asked itself – who needed the aircraft more?

The answer was clear in the minds of everyone around the table: Afghanistan. What better way could be found to help the nation crippled by a debilitating civil war and then a conflict brought on by Al Qaeda and its hosts, the Taliban.

Today, Ariana runs at least two packed-to-capacity flights in and out of India every week. Mohammad Tahim, a Herat businessman, is bringing his wife to India for a medical check-up. He says, "The best thing that could have happened to us is the resumption of flights between Kabul and New Delhi." And that, he says, he knows couldn't have been possible without the help of India. "It's all because of the planes that you gave us."

Ariana's India connection goes way back to its birth in 1955.

It was in the fitness of things then perhaps that after the 2001 war, Ariana's first international flight was to New Delhi, bringing the then Afghan civil aviation and tourism minister, who then said, "I am very happy that our first flight was to our friendly country India."

Shortly thereafter India announced it would give Ariana Afghan Airlines three aircraft. Air-India handed over the first Airbus A300-B4, 'Godavari', painted in Ariana's colours,



on September 17, 2002. It was promptly deployed for operation of commercial services to Sharjah, Turkey and Germany. A-I's crew and maintenance engineers were deputed to Ariana to assist in the operations.

The second aircraft, Airbus 300-B4, 'Cauvery', which had been reconfigured to carry 260 passengers, was delivered to Ariana two months later on December 24. A thorough check was carried out before the craft was handed over because of Ariana's limited resources.

The third aircraft, Airbus A300-B4, 'Ganga', was delivered just three months later, March 2003 – during the visit of President Karzai to India – just over a year after Ariana's first flight to New Delhi in January 2002. Essential spares including two engines were also given with the planes.

Abdul Rashid Rashadi, an Afghan journalist, calls the gift of aircraft "a very important help", which "solved a lot of problems". Most of his family – mother and brother – are in New Delhi, having reached there many years ago. They have no plans of returning.

"This is a very old relationship," he says about ties with India, "and one without any ulterior motives."

## Helping Ariana

- ◆ Fifty-one Ariana Afghan airlines officials were trained by Air-India
- ◆ Flight engineers ground basic class room training was provided to eight officials of Ariana Afghan Airlines at Indian Airlines training centre, Hyderabad for a period of six weeks in September-October 2003.



# INDUSTRIAL power



Back in business







**K**hurasan Plastic factory is small only by international standards. Its young owner Mohammad Halim once had great plans. He put all his savings into this unit believing nothing could come now between him and success.

This unit is just one of the many such in this sprawling industrial park complex inaugurated many years ago, in 1976, by then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It turned into a mini industrial township in some years.

The conditions were good, so business was good. Then Afghanistan got sucked into a 10-year-old civil war and the industrial park became a battleground. The well designed and equipped park began looking like a war zone.

A stray bomb hit an electric substation, knocking out one of its three powerful transformers. Another substation, just a few yards away, fell a victim to gangs of looters and robbers that invariably follow advancing or retreating armies.

Both substations now work to less than half their capacity. And industrial units linked to them get electricity only for couple of

hours every day. Halim's unit, for instance, gets only three or four hours of electricity.

Haji Zarib Gul's plastic shoe factory, just a few yards from Halim's, is in a similar situation. He has ultra-modern machines imported from Taiwan idling around. "I can't work them at all for lack of electricity," he says. He is a big man, but not big enough to conceal his despair.

But help has arrived. India is refitting the substations, bringing three spanking new 1250 KVA transformers that will get this sleepy industrial complex bustling with activity once again. Halim looks forward to that day.

"My daily output will multiply several times," he says, which will boost his profits, enable him to employ more people and sell slippers cheaper. Economies of scale is not a concept alien to him or other Afghan industrialists here.

Halim's brother explains. "A lot of plastic is wasted in the process of starting the machines again and again." Uninterrupted electricity supply will cut wastage, which will bring down production costs.

A pair of their plastic slippers will cost Afs 3 less – coming down from Afs 25 to Afs 22. "We can sell more for less," says Halim.

The complex has 287 units in all, 98 of them are out of action for the moment because of lack of infrastructural facilities such as electricity.







The shrine of Hazrat Ali in Mazar-e-Sharif for the repair of which the Indian Government has given Afghanistan US \$ 20,000







# LANGUAGE is the Key



## Teaching English







**Srinivasan: Can you all speak English?**

Everyone (well, almost everyone): "Yes, we can."

**Srinivasan: Bashir, would you like to say a few lines about Id?**

(Bashir walks up to the front of the class.)

Bashir: Good morning. Id is a very good festival. Before Id, people will buy cakes, cookies, offer prayers, sacrifice goat....

This government official could barely speak a word of English till a few months ago. Today he can. And with enough confidence to let Srinivas, an Indian teacher who has been in Kabul for a year now as part of the reconstruction assistance, flaunt him to any visitor who needs proof of the pudding.

Srinivasan has been teaching English to a class of government officials drawn from a variety of ministries and departments for a year now. It's not a class in the strictest sense of the word – students can walk in and walk out any time they wish.



"They can come whenever they can get away from work," says Srinivasan. His class is a mix of men and women, old and young, senior and junior government officials. But it's a classless class – no one stands on hierarchy, they are all equal here.

Sajjia, a welfare ministry official, brings her son and daughter to the class too. All of them want to learn English. Liza Zamani, a health official, wants to learn English because every one else at home – son and daughter-in-law – is constantly jabbering away in English.

Jawad Ahmad, a labour ministry official, agrees to take the floor now.

"Before this class," he begins haltingly, "I couldn't speak this language at all. But now I can." He can even write in English, he lets on later.

At the diplomacy school of the foreign ministry, Veer Singh is taking his class through the paces: the subject today is countries, capitals, population etc.

**Veer: What is the Capital of Greece?**

A student: Ankara?

Veer: You tell me.

A discussion follows, with help coming from all sides.

The student: Athens.



**Veer: Next question. Where is Sri Lanka?**

No one answers. Some go back to their books, others hazard possibilities.

Veer prompts: It's very close to a big country.

A student offers hesitatingly: Colombo.

Veer: Naaaah. That's the capital of Sri Lanka. Try again.

A student: It's near India.

**Veer now pushes the envelope a bit: Tell me, anybody, what's the old name of Sri Lanka?**

That's a tough one, no one even tries to answer it. The answer, Veer tells them, is Ceylon.

Most of these students are again government officials from the foreign affairs ministry. English lessons are a useful ticket to a posting abroad, or, at the very least, a visit abroad with some delegation.



That's Veer's main gripe: "Some of them drop out of the class soon as that purpose - a foreign visit - is served. They never come back." But a lot of them do.

Durkhana, for instance, is not after a foreign tour. She just wants to be able to handle calls coming into the foreign ministry. She is a telephone operator. "Baley (yes, in the local language) is her instinctive reply when she answers a call.

**Veer: So have you begun to say hello?**

Durkhana: Yes, I have. I have to, most callers are foreigners.

Ashwini Yadav, the third Indian teacher in Kabul, holds classes for newspaper journalists and officials of state-run Afghanistan Television.

His classes, a student says, are very popular. "Indian teachers are easier to follow," says another.

It also helps when the teacher can use the local language to explain a particularly knotty English word or construction. Srinivasan, in fact, can speak fluent Dari and dips into it as often as he can to get things rolling.

# Sharing HERITAGE



## Training people





## Training in India

Niyamatullah Niyamat wants to go back one more time. Those two months in India were fun. And life-changing in a way: he met a Hindi film star. He would love to go back, if it wasn't for his age.

Niyamatullah was the oldest of the 15 Afghan newsmen who went to India in February 2003 for training at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC). For two months, experts took them through the various aspects of journalism – editing, reporting and newspaper production.

"It was extremely useful," he says. At the state-run Bakhtar News Agency in Kabul, Niyamatullah is head of the international news department, which makes press releases out of the material sent by various departments of the government every day.

The work involves translating inputs - which are mostly in the two national languages, Dari and Pashtu – into English, written as a news report, and then headlining them. Niyamatullah says he finds himself using more and more of what he learnt at the IIMC. Sometimes, and this is the best part, unconsciously.

Niyamatullah was most impressed by one of the guest experts who addressed the group. "I forget his name – was he from the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute? – he was awesome. He knew more about Afghanistan – the history, people and politics – than any of us."

"Will never forget the time we spent there," he says, eyes misting over just a bit.

His colleague at Bakhtar, Sultan Hamid Ashna, was in the first batch of trainees, September 2002. He found the course a little too short, "unfortunately". Before he knew it, it was time to go home. "Oh, it was tremendous," he gushes, "the faculty at the IIMC was tremendous."

So what did he learn? Ashna rushes through the course heads: use of camera, how to use a TV camera, simple camera, how to become a news broadcaster, writing stories, computers, internet and marketing. No wonder he found the course "too short".

Both of them said they were impressed by their trainers. "Most of our colleagues didn't know much English," says Niyamatullah, "but the teachers made it a point to explain everything in simple English so that everyone understood."

For young Ahmad Ratib Nabizaidah, the high point came clearly towards the end of the training when they were taken to Mumbai, home of India's film industry. So who did he meet? "Oh every one," he says, smiling broadly.

By every one he meant Amitabh Bachchan, the Indian superstar who remains a larger-than-life figure despite advancing age (he is over 60) in India and Afghanistan. One of his films – Khudagawah – was shot in Kabul (a long time ago – Ahmad couldn't have been older than five then).





Nabizaidah goes back in his mind to the institute. "When we were there, no one ever made us feel like foreigners, we never felt like outsiders."

And when he got back, he found himself looking for signs of India in Kabul, he says. And there were plenty of them. He says whenever he sees an Indian bus in Kabul – one of the many gifted by the Indian government – he feels reassured. "They are a gratifying sight."

"I see Indian buses every day, I see Indian planes every day."

## Training Afghans

### India is training:

- ◆ Afghan diplomats
- ◆ Senior officials in various ministries
- ◆ Doctors and paramedics
- ◆ Police officers and cadets
- ◆ Judges and lawyers
- ◆ Airline officials and flight engineers
- ◆ Artisans
- ◆ Women Entrepreneurs
- ◆ Surveyors and Cartographers
- ◆ Teachers

CONNECTING people



Phones for a



friend





First there were phones – fixed line phones, followed by cell phones and then satellite phones. That at least is how telecommunication evolved in the rest of the world. Afghanistan did a gravity defying leap – straight to satellite phones from landlines.

When Afghanistan renewed its acquaintance with the world – following the fall of the Taliban – its fixed line network was a mess. You couldn't call one city from another, leave alone another country.

In a hurry to join the networked world, Afghanistan leapt straight to satellite phones. Cell phones came later and now every one – at least in Kabul – is glued to a handset. Mobiles are readily available, but expensive at 10 cents a minute.



In most parts of the country, a cell phone is a luxury; especially outside Kabul. A senior ministry of telecom official says, "Afghanistan doesn't have basic telecommunication services." And this is where India is helping.

At a cost of \$ 12.5 million, India is going to provide phone services in 11 provincial capitals. The project has to be completed by December 2004. Tenders were invited for the project and the bids are being considered now.

When completed, each of these 11 capitals will have 1200-2400 phones. The technology being used is CDMA. But the phones will not be wired, they will be much like mobile phones of the wireless-in-local-loop variety.

While the technology will be the kind used for mobiles, the instruments will be tabletop fixed phones.



# MONEY matters



Helping Afgha  
banking system



nistan's





Three years ago, Afghani was a most volatile currency and the rest of the world didn't want to know why. A dollar could fetch you 60,000 Afs one day and 50,000 the day after and 30,000 the third day. Today it's a stable currency.

What has changed since? A lot. Da Afghanistan Bank, the country's central bank, is undergoing a complete overhaul helped by six bankers from India. They are advising the bank and Bearing Point, a firm of chartered accountants carrying out the restructuring.

Drawn from the Reserve Bank of India, State Bank of India and Bank of India, these Indians bring with them a vast understanding of banking in a developing country. They are touching every aspect of DAB – from customer service to currency stabilization.

Encashing a cheque would earlier take anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour. Today, the waiting time is down to 10 minutes. Exchanging dollars for Afs took about the same time with papers passing at least five desks. Now, you can have your Afs in 15 minutes.

Ghulam Hassan makes a trip to Da Afghanistan Bank once every week for many years. He says the bank has changed drastically. There was a time when nothing seemed to move at all – a cheque went around the office several times before making it back.



Abdur Rahim, an employee of the foreign exchange department, finds his own work simplified beyond imagination. Earlier, the form was approved, signed and counter-signed five times, by five different officials.

Moving around the office at its own pace, the form would come back in around an hour. People would hang around only if really desperate – moneychangers just outside the bank offered quicker service and better rates.

They now have competition. Rahim says he can hand over the required currency in 10 minutes flat. "And I don't even have to count the notes manually now," he says proudly pointing to a franking machine.

What does he think, are the Indians any help? "They have been a huge help," he says, giving the six Indian bankers more credit than is possibly due to them. After all, there are many more people helping the bank change and improve.

But some of the critical changes can be attributed to Indians and Indians alone: the computerization of the bank and its branches for instance. Anil Kumar Dubey handled that. N Ramasubramanian and Jothi Kumar are helping with accounting, Salil Patil is working on trade finances, letters of credit and remittances, Shahid Jehangir on credit processes and Vineet Gangal on correspondent banking and cash management.

They call themselves Team India.



# POWER to Kabul



Bringing electr  
to the capital



icity





Deputy minister for power Naoandish doesn't like to sugarcoat the bad news: Kabul is in trouble. If something is not done urgently, the demand for electricity will spiral out of control any day soon.

The situation in the Capital may not be as bad as the rest of the country but most Kabulis have to make do with insufficient supply – just a few hours every day. Uninterrupted supply costs more, not every one can afford it.

The three hydel power plants providing electricity to the capital are old and decrepit – they are over 48 years old and running short now of their power source – water. Naoandish blames it on drought.



The population of Kabul is multiplying at a tremendous rate with refugees returning to reclaim abandoned properties or just coming back to their country to pick up from wherever they left many years ago.

Where will Kabul find the necessary quantity of electricity to light up their homes or shops or industries?

It has arranged for electricity from its northern neighbour Uzbekistan – 150 megawatt. Will that solve Kabul's problems? Most certainly it will, if it can quickly erect the pylons, stringing them together right up to Hairatan.

Right across from Hairatan is Uzbekistan, separated by Amu Darya. From here power lines funded by the Asian Development Bank will bring electricity up to Pul-e-Khumri.

India is helping Afghanistan complete the rest of the transmission system, bringing this much needed electricity to Kabul, over the mountains and through the Salang Pass.

A team of officials from the Power Grid Corporation and RITES was in Afghanistan during the peak of winter some weeks ago surveying the landscape for pylon-sites.

Plodding through knee-deep (sometimes even higher) snow, they mapped the whole area and where the terrain got treacherous – oh yes, it can get quite tricky – they used helicopters. The mapping and soil analysis is over.

The minister is hoping the Indian government will fund the project too – "as another sign of the historical friendship between the two countries."

*Other infrastructure development help:*

- ◆ The Indian Government has approved construction of the road from Delaram to Zaranj in Afghanistan based on feasibility study and detailed project assessment carried out by Indian experts. The work is expected to commence by August 2004
- ◆ WAPCOS has carried out detailed project assessment for rehabilitation of six mini/micro hydro projects, Khanbad irrigation project, Qargha reservoir and Amir Ghazi Dam
- ◆ Twenty-four deep water wells were dug in Herat after WAPCOS located 50 deep well sites
- ◆ WAPCOS has carried out a feasibility study and detailed project assessment of the completion of Salam Dam project in Herat.



# SHOWTIME folks



TV and Radio





for all



For as long as any Afghan can remember, jumma raat has been a big night. It's the start of the weekend and every Kabuli rushes home from work, market or whatever other engagements that may have kept them out. The streets empty out like there was a curfew clamped on the capital.

They want to be home in time for the Hindi film shown by the state-run TV every Thursday night. Abdul Rehman Panjshiri, Afghanistan Television's director international relations, says very matter-of-factly, "If not for these films, we may have to shut down the company and go home."

There is a considerable amount of excitement today in Afghanistan Television about another development that will completely change the way the country – and not just Kabul – watches television.

And that is: uplinking equipment and facility that is being given to Afghanistan by India. Using the equipment, Afghanistan TV would send the signals up to an Indian satellite that will then beam down the signal to all parts of Afghanistan.

As of now, Afghanistan TV reach doesn't extend beyond Kabul.

Very soon, Afghanistan TV would be reaching every part of Afghanistan – from Kandahar in the south to Hairatan in

the north and from Jalalabad in the east to Herat in the west.

"It will bring the country together like nothing before," says Panjshiri.

The TV uplink station in Wazir Akbar Khan will be ready for use in April 2004. Afghanistan TV would be using the Indian satellite INSAT III-A.

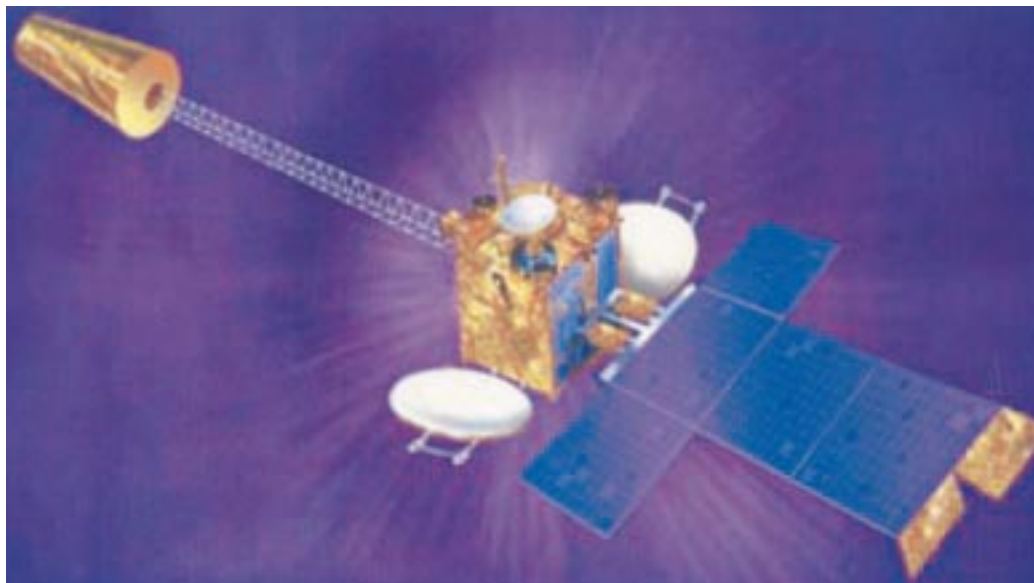
It were not as if Afghanistan TV was always in this shape. It had an uplinking station, just a few metres from the one being built by India. It used then the Soviet satellite Sputnik. But the station was irreparably damaged during bombing.

An Afghan political observer said that uplinking would be a tremendous help during the coming elections. "It will play a major role in conveying the message of elections to the rest of the country and refugees outside Afghanistan."

It may not quite be a multi-million-dollar help, but just imagine the impact!

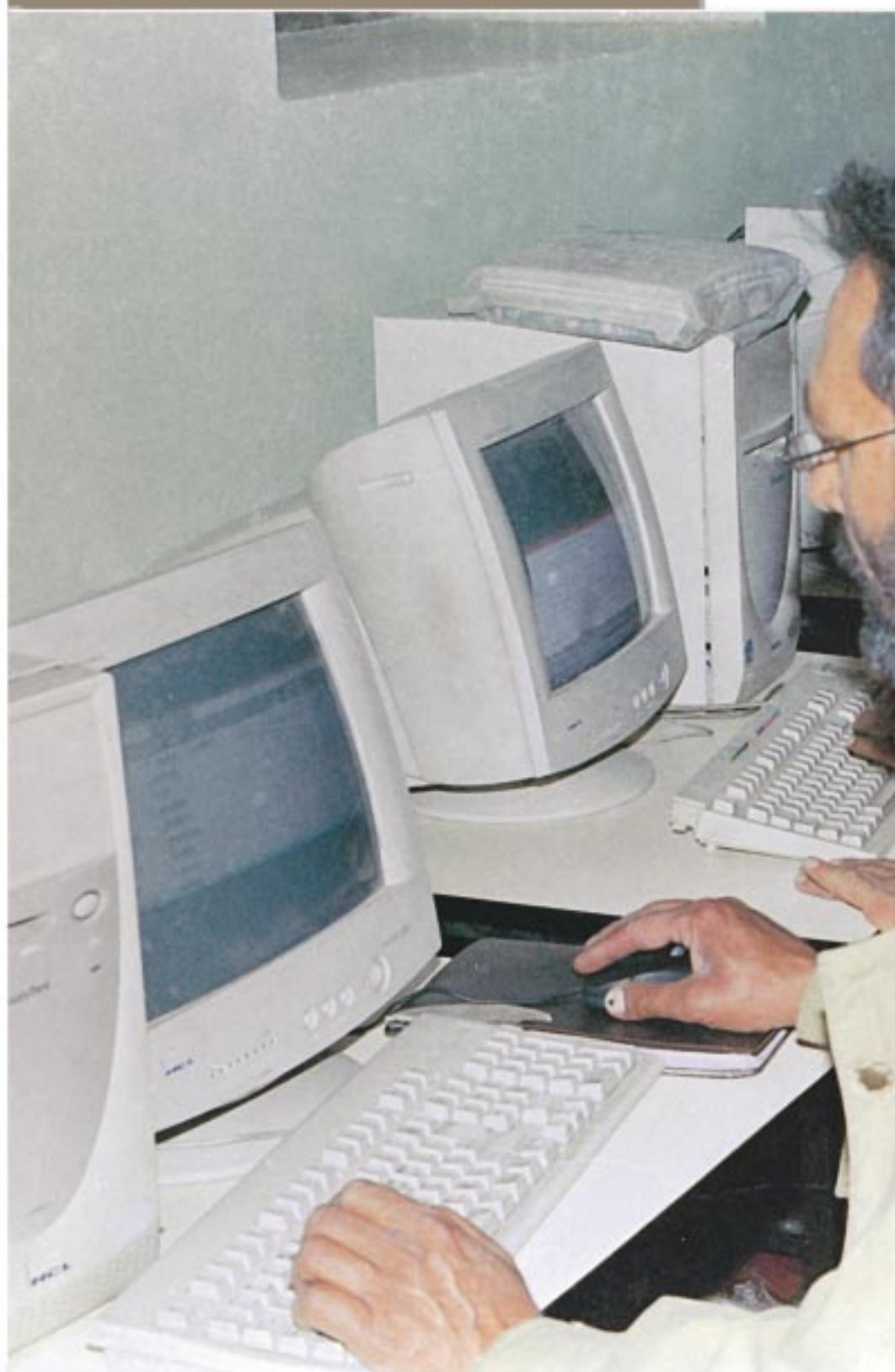
## Culture call

- ◆ The Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited is setting up a modern offset printing machine with DTP facility; setting up a new 100 kw SW transmitter apart from the TV satellite uplinking/downlinking facility
- ◆ Some musical instruments were sent for the Afghan Radio and Television in February 2002. Another lot was gifted to Kabul University in April 2003 and some instruments were also given to the ceremonial band of the Presidential Guard of Afghanistan in June 2003
- ◆ US \$ 20,000 were given for the repair of Hazrat Ali Shrine in Mazar-e-Sharif in September 2002
- ◆ The Indian Council of Cultural Relations has allocated two slots for Afghans wishing to learn music in India.





LOGGED IN



Taking Afghani



stan Online



## Computer centres

It was examination day and they looked just as tense as boys facing their first major exam. In a few moments they will be seated in chairs neatly arranged in three rows. If they clear the test, they will advance to a higher level of computer training. And that's crucial.

All of them are government employees whose careers now depend on how well they can work the computer. This computer centre was set up by the Indian government in 2002, and now handles 500 students at one time, training in shifts.

Fawad Muslim is in charge of this centre and the man responsible for making the foreign ministry of Afghanistan a well networked government office, with help from India and some other donor countries.

A local area network with internet access was provided by the Indian government to Afghanistan within months of the Interim Administration taking charge. And the foreign ministry went online, perhaps the first government department to go cyber.

Thanking India for the project, foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah said in 2002, "Afghanistan now has access to the world". A team of three experts from India's National Informatics

Centre stayed in Kabul for two weeks to set up the computers and the Internet connection.

An IT specialist is deputed now to the Afghan government since June 20, 2003 for a period of one year. In July 2002, a computer centre was set up in Kabul to train government officials. This is the one that's run by Fawad now, with brilliant results.

In a little over a year and a half since the centre went operational, over 2,500 have left it fully trained in handling a computer, with varying degrees of specialisation.

India has started similar centres elsewhere now. There are two in Kandahar and Herat, since August, 2003 and one each in Pul-e-Khumri and Jalalabad.







सत्यमेव जयते

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