

Afghanistan Update

A humanitarian initiatives and progress report

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Recent News

Afghan artist establishes non-profit organization to sponsor widowed families

[BBC](#) reported on Monday, August 11, 2008 that Afghan singer and composer Farhad Darya has begun a charity organization to supplement the incomes of widows in Kabul. Darya's organization, called [Kochah](#), is able to help the widows by using money generated through private donations as well as from Darya's performances. On Kochah's [news page](#) Darya said his organization was able to help sponsor 100 widowed families in 2007 through the "Street Accounts" program which was funded by concert revenue from performances in the United States, Canada and Germany. Darya's organization has had the cooperation of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs as well as the Kabul Bank, which set up 20,000 available accounts for families.

Saffron could replace poppy production in rural Afghanistan

According to [IRIN News](#), the [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) said [saffron](#) could replace [poppy](#) as a lucrative cash crop in rural Afghanistan. In a story reported on August 6, 2008, IRIN reported that international aid groups and donors are helping the Afghan government establish saffron as a solid money-making crop in the [Pashton Zargon District in the Herat Province](#). Department of Agriculture's irrigation and livestock official Bashir Ahmad Ahmadi told IRIN, "We plan to distribute 49 tons of saffron bulbs to farmers in Herat and 11 other provinces this year." Production has soared in the last two years and officials said an additional 1,000 farmers have requested the flowers.

Canadian charity ball raises money for expectant mothers in Kabul province

In a [press release](#) dated August 11, 2008, officials from [UNICEF Canada](#) said the recent Toronto Garrison Officers Ball raised \$250,000 for expectant mothers and newborns at the [Khair Khana](#) Hospital in Kabul province. [Skyhawks](#) Canadian Army footage reported the ball provided a venue for business and military leaders to come together to support the cause.

Bayat Foundation Announcements

Afghanistan's first Olympic medalist receives continuing Olympic training grant

On August 28, 2008 in Kabul the Bayat Foundation announced an Olympic training grant for continued training and related efforts to 21-year old Rohullah Nikpai, Afghanistan's first Olympic medalist who won the men's 58-kg taekwondo competition against the former world champion on August 20, 2008 in Beijing. (Sponsored by Bayat Foundation NGO Afghanistan)

A field of dreams: new Parwan Province Stadium promises hope

Situated just north of Kabul the Parwan Province is now home of a new 4 thousand square meter sports facility. In the August 6, 2008 opening ceremony Chairman Ehsan Bayat said that the people of the Parwan and surrounding provinces now have a venue for sports training and competition. The new stadium and facilities are replete with a running track, football field, basketball and volleyball courts, weight rooms and dressing rooms. The stadium illustrates the Bayat Foundation's commitment to rebuilding facilities which will create hope, opportunity and enable victories for the Afghan people. (Sponsored by Bayat Foundation NGO Afghanistan)
