Shahrzad, a bridge connecting Western and Eastern literature

A message from Habiba Sadeqi, Director of Education and Cultural Development

Shahrzad (adjetive): situated or occurring between the stars; conducted, or existing between two or more stars

In the past over 17 digested, prestigious, and proud years, Star Educational Society has had tremendous educational and cultural achievements. Besides successful language classes, sports and sport tournaments, exhibitions of handicrafts and paintings, memorable sports contests, Fulbright advising workshops, and workshops to raise awareness of women rights and street harassment, Star's Cultural Department has now aimed its focus on publishing. To that end, the Interstellar Bulletin, Star's English Weekly, started last year. This educational weekly has been warmly received in 32 issues and thousands of issues are published distributed weekly to readers in the provinces of Kabul, Herat, Mazar e Sharif, Bamyan and Daikondi. The soft copy (pdf) of Interstellar Bulletin is distributed via email to readers around the globe.

The initial purpose of the Star's weekly was to provide Star students with fresh and relevant educational reading and writing materials, helping to elevate to inspire their interest in reading and writing, and to increase their reading comprehension and vocabulary. The Interstellar Bulletin was a big step in Afghanistan's print media. The eight colorful and well-designed pages of the Interstellar Bulletin cover diverse topics making Interstellar Bulletin is distributed via email to readers around the globe. The eight colorful and well-designed pages of the Interstellar Bulletin cover diverse topics making Star students with fresh and relevant educational reading and writing materials, helping to elevate to inspire their interest in reading and writing, and to increase their reading comprehension and vocabulary. The Interstellar Bulletin was a big step in Afghanistan's print media. The eight colorful and well-designed pages of the Interstellar Bulletin cover diverse topics making Star students with fresh and relevant educational reading and writing materials, helping to elevate to inspire their interest in reading and writing, and to increase their reading comprehension and vocabulary. The Interstellar Bulletin was a big step in Afghanistan's print media.

Building upon the success of the Interstellar Bulletin, Star's Cultural Department has more news in store. After conducting a three-phase evaluation, Starians discovered the need for a professional translation gazette which could connect our current body of literature with some of the best historical works of literature in the East and the West. Shahrzad, whose stories are translated into many languages, adapted to many movies, theaters, and plays which are visible all around the world, is reconfigured into the frame of a professional translation monthly with the purpose of introducing some of the best contemporary masterpieces of literature from other languages to Persian. The translation of these pieces and literary articles, poems, and beautiful short stories will serve the Persian language readers and literature lovers. Shahrzad proved that if the story is not written, life will not continue and if stories are not in the annals of history, they will eventually vanish. Our Shahrzad also speaks, narrates, and tells these stories of the East and the West. Shahrzad's One Thousand and One Nights tells us many tales of many lives and with this hope we introduce the inaugural issue of our Shahrzad.

A message from Habiba Sadeqi, Director of Education and Cultural Development
Helping to educate Afghan street kids

My Dream Village

I am your child. We want a school.

A poem from the Borderfree Street Kids School republished from:
http://ourjourneysmile.com/blog/2015/01/11/i-am-your-child-we-want-a-school-
afghan-street-kids-walk/

“I want a school, unlike a school.”
Inam, unaware he was making Afghan history, walked, morphed into a mini-visionary, and understood that we don’t get things by asking, especially asking government officials in high, swivel or mahogany chairs.

We get bread by fracturing the side of a used engine oil bottle, strapping it on as our shoe cleaning box, and sitting in the littered streets polishing other people’s boots. Though he doesn’t feel good about his view of passing legs hidden in jeans or burqas, there are customers here, in a commoditized life, where, instead of growing food, the city bangs on computers and copies sheaves of forms, to extract from her slum-dwellers their energies and bribes, and the land’s mineral flesh, as well as their children’s.

Inam arrives for the walk, zooming in for the lego set, putting the blocks in place piece by piece, the blue door of his dream school, ‘where I can study’, safely, he says, because you’ll understand this too, “I am your child.”

“Inam building his dream school from a lego set”

About the Author: Milad Jafari was a diligent student of C-Branch of the Educational Society. Currently, he is studying Advanced Art B-Branch. He likes to write more and tries to be a good writer in the future.

The village has always been known a place of peace and quietness. The scattered houses among hundreds of plants and trees indicate the lack of activities in the village. The workers in the village leave their homes early in the morning to work in the farms or towns nearby. Some have their own farms, and some make handicrafts and other things in their homes to sell in the towns. A few of the villagers, including women, go out to catch fish in the streams and rivers found in the village. Though the people of the village do not usually earn much, they seem to be content. In the afternoon, most of the villagers are at home. Some of them take a nap after lunch, do some work in their small gardens or visit the small shops in the village. In various parts of the village, children may be found playing the popular games of the village. Occasionally, a cyclist passes by.

In the evening, the villagers meet one another. Some play cards and other types of games which are unique to the village. Some talk about the day’s incidents in the village, and those whose minds go beyond the village discuss world events. In almost every village there is a village leader whose duty is to settle quarrels among the villagers and maintain peace in the village. Whenever there is a dispute, the villagers go to the leader who is held in such esteem that his words have the force of law. In this way the villagers have developed their own simple laws, and the crimes of cities are almost unknown to the people of the village.

During a festival, the whole village is alive with activities. Everyone is in a happy mood and plays his part to make the festi-
val a success. This is the time for the men, women and children of the village to wear their best clothes and the village is full of color. These simple ways of life in the village, however, must soon change. Progress in science and education has already begun to affect the outlook of the people in the village. Hundreds are leaving the village to seek their fortunes in the towns and cities.

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About the Author: Mahshid Jalal is a Star alumna. She is currently studying Business Administration at the American University of Afghanistan and a volunteer teacher at the Borderfree Street Kids School. She wants to be a businesswoman in the future.

I live in a country whose people are thirsty for peace. They seek tranquility and a prosperous life. In addition, my country is home to nearly two million children working outside their homes to earn money to support their families and meet their basic needs. These poor children work tirelessly every day of the year, even in the winter when the frigid weather keeps most people indoors. They are responsible for buying food, fuel and anything the family needs to survive. They can’t attend school regularly in order to work more and earn more money. And some of them have left school because they couldn’t find time to do their homework and were subject to punishment by their teachers or teasing from their classmates.

Education is fundamental for the development of a country. Therefore, it is not fair that these children are unedu-
cated. It is a basic right that they should not be deprived of. Last year a group of youth activists came together and estab-
lished a school for these children. Every Friday these street children attend classes and each month their families receive a donation of rice, cooking oil, and beans. They also receive clothes and a quilt in the winter. The Borderfree Street Kids School is not only teaching the children writing, reading and math, but also nonviolence and creativity. At the school all are work-
ing to abolish war and to achieve a stable peace. In the class on nonviolence, the children symbolically broke their toy guns and declared that they are not the genera-
tion of war. Instead of weapons they will use pens and books. They are the children of peace and kindness. One of the children said, “The sky is not the place of war and killing, it is the place of the moon, sun, stars, kites and birds.” In their creativity class, they share their dreams and goals and the way that they can achieve them. We all try for stable peace in our country. Today we sow a planet of peace in their hearts. It will grow and they will give the fruit of peace for the next generation.

Now the children understand that they are also human beings and are cru-
cial citizens of this country. I can see their potential. I can see their desire to create a different and peaceful future. I can see a deep aspiration for greater knowledge as they strive for a change. Their enthusiasm sparkles and I can see the desire for learn-
ing and a bright future in their eyes. Today I am helping them. Tomorrow they will help someone else, as Mahdi does.

Mahdi is 13-years-old. He polishes boots every day for three dollars. He works to feed his family. He also comes to the Borderfree School to learn and help. He said that if this school helped him to be educated and rescued him from the dark-
ness of illiteracy without expecting any-
thing from him he can also help other people. Now he helps us with the duvet project as a volunteer. He wants to be better educated in the future and serve more people. Mahdi’s bravery, generosity, hopefulness and righteousness are a great model for us and others.

When I first saw street children, I blamed the government for not doing anything. But I discovered that the gov-
ernment needs the cooperation of its citi-
zens. If I can study and be educated, then I can help the poor and needy people, too. Thus, I joined the Borderfree School to teach. I think that I can pave the way so that they can find their own pathways. I believe there is undiscovered strength in-
side these children to bring a change. One day they will realize and show their hidden power. They are the heroes. The suffering children who work on Kabul streets will be the honest leaders of tomorrow.
I received a message Tuesday morning from Star Educational Society’s alumnus and former teacher, Halima Habibi, inviting me to an Afghan Peace Volunteer’s event in Babur Gardens (Bagh-e-Babur). The Afghan Peace Volunteers (AVP) are an inter-ethnic group of young Afghans dedicated to building non-violent alternatives to war. At 2:00 the same afternoon, I joined dozens of young Peace Volunteers on a crowded, rented bus for the short trip from AVP’s Borderfree Nonviolence Center in Karte-seh to Babur Garden; and have begun a new project, called the ‘Borderfree Attan,” one of many multi-ethnic projects of the Center. The Attan is an Afghan national dance that is traditionally danced by the Pashtuns at weddings and other celebrations. But the Attan that I witnessed was performed by Peace Volunteers from all ethnic groups, AVP’s friend and mentor, Dr. Hakim, (Dr. Teck Young, WEE - a medical doctor from Singapore), and other park-goers who joined the circle of dancers.

Some of the female Peace Volunteers dispersed among the crowd to distribute bright blue Borderfree scarves for all the dancers and participants. The dohul player started to drum on his big-barreled, two-sided drum and the Attan performance began. The young men in their crisp white clothes began the circular dance and followed the lead dancer round and round to the deep, low beat of the dohul. As the rhythm and beat became faster, the dance intensified. Several of the young men left the circle, and the remaining four most experienced dancers continued until a climactic finale.

I sat on the stone wall next to Sherri Maurin, an American educator and long-time peace activist, who has been to Kabul four times in the past year and a half volunteering with AVP. I was also introduced to Afghan-American, Fahima Vorgetts, who is the director of the Afghan Women’s Fund, and an award-winning activist for peace, justice and human rights. Both women are great friends of AVP and enjoyed warm relations with many of the young volunteers.

An Afghan Peace Volunteer is an Afghan civil society volunteer organization which was created in 2008 after a three-month Peace Workshop at Bamiyan University. The workshop was facilitated by Singaporean medical doctor and humanitarian worker, Dr. Hakim. The 50 university students who participated concluded that ‘peace in Afghanistan is not possible,’ but 16 of them from six different ethnic groups agreed to live together for a semester to demonstrate the possibility for ethnic unity.

Extending from this effort, Bamiyan youth gathered to raise their voices for peace and to protest against war, violence and killings in Afghanistan. They held a tent vigil at Bamiyan Peace Park, which they had helped to establish, asking U.S. President Obama to bring genuine peace and reconciliation to Afghanistan. After the vigil, a core group of Afghan youth assembled and called themselves the Afghan Peace Volunteers. They began communicating with international peacekeepers and sent their message of nonviolence to people in other parts of the world. With their new person-to-person relationships with other Afghan youth and with international peace groups, they began to campaign consistently for an end to violence and war.

In 2011, the core group of Afghan Peace Volunteers moved to Kabul to study, live and work together in their commitment to non-violence. The organization was officially registered with the Afghan Ministry of Justice and they organized one of their first campaigns in Kabul, the ‘I wish to live without war’ campaign. They invited 25 international peace builders of a U.S. based peace group, Voices for Creative Nonviolence, to participate and have maintained close ties with this group ever since.

Since its inception, AVP has conducted an after-school tutoring program; hosted a seamstress workshop for Afghan women; organized the making and distribution of thousands of duvets to poor families in Kabul, including those in refugee camps and helped the women who made them to earn an income; created the Borderfree Street Kids School; and established a Food Bank to receive and store donated food items from Afghan shopkeepers, business persons and charitable groups, to be distributed to needy families, starting with the families of the 83 Afghan street kids at the Borderfree Afghan Street Kids School. They have held conflict resolution and peer mediation training; have an Afghan women’s tailoring cooperative; are developing the Kabul Peace Gardens, and have begun a new project, with the help of Halima, called the ‘Borderfree Cycling Club’ which was formed to encourage Afghan boys and girls to use the bicycle instead of motorcycles and cars.

At the end of the Attan performance, the seventy plus Peace Volunteers walked to another part of the park where they enjoyed cake and motivational speeches before leaving the park and heading home. It was a joyful celebration and helped me to imagine how Afghanistan would look when all the ethnic groups can live in harmony and when war and violence are no longer a part of the country’s landscape.

About the Author:
Kara Lozier has been a long-time supporter of Star Educational Society and, most recently, has been very instrumental in the success of the Interstellar Bulletin. She is a former community coordinator for American Councils for International Education and has worked with Afghan students and students from many other countries through the Youth Exchange and Study program, a one-year high school exchange program created in response to the tragic events of September 11th.

Kara Lozier and Halima Habibi
Minister of Mines resigns
Translated by: Nadia Qasemi
source: BBC Persian

Dawood Shah Saba, Minister of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan, resigned from his job. Yet, President Ashraf Ghani has not accepted his resignation. Similarly, Presidential Press Office has not had any reaction.

Mahyodin Noori, Minister of Mines Spokesman told, “I don’t have detailed information about Minister of Mines resignation but he himself said that by sending a letter to Presidential Palace he had announced his resignation.” Officials of Ministry of Mines didn’t give any information about Minister of Mines resignation but some media has told that one of the cause of his resignation was giving him limited authority by government. Mr. Saba told in his last interview with BBC that mines of Afghanistan are looted. In addition, he criticized it strongly. He told that Afghanistan was not ready to extract its big mines. Minister of Mines criticized the contraction of extracting mines and told that those contraction were not beneficial for Afghanistan. Dawood Shah Saba was the governor of Herat during Hamid Karzai’s presidency for some years.

Incappable and incompetent municipality
Translation: Jawad Dadbaan
Source: Hasht-e-Subh Daily

Kabul Municipality is incapable and incompetent. This office even cannot construct a canal for roads, streets and alleys. Kabul Municipality with a lot of engineers and technical experts and a wide and long organization cannot build a watershed in the heart of Kabul. We cannot justify this failure with any excuse. However, the heads of the National Unity Government have also a role in this failure. Kabul has no Mayor now. Unfortunately, no election was held to elect Mayors in the last ten years. Although the Constitution mandates that the Mayors should be elected, no ballot box was set up to elect Mayors along holding the presidential, parliamentary and National Assembly elections.

Mr. Karzai, former President has to be blamed in this regard, but the heads of National Unity Government also had not been able to do their job. Mr. Ghani was not able to choose a Mayor for Kabul until now. When an office does not have an incumbent and powerful head, it is clear that it cannot handle its work properly. Kabul Municipality even with the presence of capable Mayors was not able to do its job, now that the town has no Mayor, the degree of Municipality’s inefficiency has become very high. The President and the Chief Executive have seen the city what it has become in rainy days. Roads are full of water and in case of severe rainfall, parts of Kabul will go under water.

There is no preparedness for heavy rainfalls. Local departments have gone into rabbit sleeping and have not understood the depth of the problem. In some areas, police drive away water from streets and alleys to other ways. Children, women, elder and young people are crossing streets with difficulty. It seems that there is no Municipality within the government’s framework.

It is better that the government takes action as soon as possible. A commission should be established and some ways for prevention of standing waters in public squares be sought. The problem of standing water at intersections needs a technical solution. Road construction and urban management experts should come together in a commission and discuss on solving of this problem. It is clear that a lot of construction work in the past ten years has caused wiped out of Kabul’s old water. Also, unstandardized construction of roads and neglect of watersheds or canals also contribute to the problem. In the days of raining, it is very difficult that someone from Kabul outskirts could reach the city center without difficulties. The President once had said that Kabul should have several mayors, maybe this is a good idea, but now we need to solve the urgent problem of road blockage and the sinking of intersections under water in rainy days.

For this purpose, it is necessary to form a technical and professional commission and seek solutions for the problem. Also, the president should appoint a mayor for Kabul immediately, so that the affairs should not become more unorganized. Any kind of political or non-political problem facing to elect mayor should be solved. The President and Chief Executive must take decisive decision and solve Municipality’s problem. It is required in the future that beside holding parliamentary and district councils’ elections, election should be set up in cities too so that people could elect mayors for their cities. Electing of mayors is a constitutional mandate and therefore should be implemented as soon as possible. When mayors are elected by people’s votes, they will put more efforts to provide services for voters. The reports of Meteorological Organizations show that Kabul will saw rainfall in coming days too, because of this, an immediate solution to prevent sinking of intersections under water to be sought.

America gives four A29 battle planes to ANA
Translator: Emran Poya
Source: Elaast-e-rooz

Dawlat Wazeri, spokesman of Ministry of Defense says that United States of America today, Tuesday, March 29, delivered Four Battle Planes A29 to the Air Force of the country. Mr. Wazeri by posting this news on his public Facebook Page, written that these Battle Planes are brand of “A29 Super Techno” delivered to the Air Force of the country as previous agreement of America.

Wazeri added that by accede these planes, Number of A29 Planes of Air Force increased to eight planes. These Planes will be effective and some tactic problems will be solved. In November this year, Ashton Carter, Defense Minister of America in a trip to Afghanistan promised that his country will give 20 Battle Planes to Afghanistan till January 2016. Last year, in December, this country had given four Battle Planes brand of A29 to the Air Force of the country in Kabul. In February, NATO Forces had given 2 Battle Planes to the south zone of the country.

These Battle Planes have constant wings and are also armed with lighting system. Moreover, these Battle Planes can carry heavy battle equipment. Likewise, these Planes are equipped with laser system and can carry 25 kilograms of bombs.

Military Forces of Afghanistan previously emphasized that the army is not provided with Air supports when fighting against the adversaries. But, apparently the equipment of Air Forces was under the focus of Afghan Officers as well as the supporting countries.
Two economic plan approvals in Higher Economic Management Council

The president also talked about the beginning of a practical work of some infrastructure projects including some dams in the National Provision Commission meeting.

According to a declaration of the Presidential Office, the Ministry of Energy and Water has submitted 9 big, medium and small water dams in that meeting and the president has asked the Ministry of Finance to act for the provision of financial source for this projects.

Mr. Ghani says that for the practical beginning work of the infrastructure projects including the building of dams should be launched according to the existing facilities.

Moreover, the Chief Executive Officer, Abdullah Abdullah, has also said in the National Provision meeting that first the development projects should be prioritized. According to him the prioritized projects should be started with no delay by the consideration of the facilities.

Two economic plan approvals in Higher Economic Management Council

Transl. by: Hadi Shaikhzada
Source: Hashi-e-Sabih

Hashti-e-Sabih Kabul: the Higher Economic Management Council approved the expanding of the free economic narrow water field and generating of labor force office.

The president’s office says that those plans are approved on Saturday in Higher Economic Council meeting by the lead of President. President Ghani has said that a common team had to work together for the purpose of land price determination and for the expanding of the free economic narrow water field with presence of different sectors representatives. According to him, this act will cause the encouragement of private sectors for more enterprises and also is an income for government.

The President also includes that the need for expanding of the free economic narrow water field to electric power and water should be studied. He also has asked New Kabul Bank Development Office to work cooperatively with vice presidency in economic affairs and offer a specific proposal for the Higher Economic Council. He says that the government will focus more on the private sectors economic locomotion in the expanding of the free economic narrow water field project rather than government’s incomes. According to him, the more we have economic locomotion, the more job opportunities will be created.

However, Rafiullah Gul Afghan, the President’s office approbation, has said that the government would observe the labor, ability and capacity of the private sectors and the labor force would focus on filling those voids that the private sectors did not show enthusiasm for them.

He affirmed that about work and ability, a plan should be established for the precedence and the area of the Labor Force Office that the area should be clear.

And also it is planned in Higher Economic Management Council meeting that for cleaning the city of Kabul a quarterly labor force should be used. The participants said that, though it was the Kabul’s city provost job to clean, the labor force should cooperate.

Economic plan suspensions in 11th district

Ministry of Interior Affairs suspended head of Kabul’s 11th district and four other police officers following the mine explosion in the area. Ministry of Interior Affairs announced that one civilian was killed and nine other were wounded after an embedded mine exploded in a culvert. The mine exploded on Tuesday in ‘Panjsad Family’ area of 11th district, Kabul.

The announcement also mentions that the head and four police officers of 11th district are suspended. In addition, the inspection group is ordered to thoroughly investigate the accident. However, Rafiullah Gul Afghan, former council member said the mine was exploded near his house and his car, and four people were killed and fifteen other injured.

Head of 11th district is suspended

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As he was putting the toys on the wooden boards, he was trying to prevent any harm which could destroy the toys attracted him, and their beautiful colors made him much more cautious for putting the toys in appropriate places for sale.

Rohullah is ten years old and is a resident of Kart-e-Parwan, Kabul City. It has been two years that he continuously is busy with selling toys.

Although he has sold hundreds and thousands of toys, none of those toys were his.

According to him, if he had taken one of those toys, he would have been blamed because he was not allowed to do that.

He says: “I love remote control vehicles but I was even scared to touch it because if it was damaged then no one would buy it. Whenever a boy with his father buys such vehicles then I wish I was that boy and own remote control vehicles.”

He adds that, I buy the toys from Mandavi (a common and broad center of buying and selling) and carefully sell them because the shop is not mine and I am just an apprentice.

Rohullah, daily earns about 500 to 600 Afs and according to toys’ sales during a day, he is only allowed to take 100 to 150 Afs.

According to him, about two years ago when his father got jobless then he was forced to venture this job and work as an apprentice.

He states that my father is jobless and I am the only financial supporter of my family. We are four brothers and three sisters and I am the oldest of all my siblings. I daily earn 500 to 600 Afs but just take 100 to 150 Afs and give the remaining money to my employer.

According to this 10 years old boy, the whole investment of the shop is 5000 Afs. He does not have that much money to open a shop and work independently so all the advantages go to the shop’s owner.

Rohullah who has put his toys for sale in Dahan-e-bagh, Shaharra, Kabul city, says that most of the time from one side policemen don’t allow us to work and force us to escape and from other side the sales ratio is low compared to last year.

He further adds that, he hates policemen so much and does not even want to sell any army games (a type of toy for children). Rohullah’s request from policemen is, not to disturb them but let them sell their toys!

Wandering toy seller

Translation: Sahar Sajjadi
Source: Hashi-e-Sabih Daily

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I love you very much, but we can't get married to each other. It's been 12 days since I came back from Helmand, where I risked my life to find money. I was dying to hear her voice before the time that her parents knew about our relationship, had forbidden her to hold a cell phone and contact with any outsider boy. For a second I reviewed the hardships and difficulties I endured to get enrolled with US Marine Corps for a well-paid job and difficulties I endured to get enrolled with Star Educational Society. I am not allowed to arrange the wedding of other people's bride for your son. I hope this is clear. It is not worth if you wait and discuss it until tomorrow morning. Mommy was disappointed more than I did as result of the conversation which lasted about 30 minutes. She huffed a deep breath and closed her eyes listening to an unpleasant roar of Ibrahim who did not let her to express her last words: "Fatana, pair their shoes, they are leaving." It was 10:50 pm. Mommy and I left their house angrily without saying a word. Neither we, nor they said goodbye. We walked in silence under the bone-colored moonlight which was getting brightened and then blurred by a thin cloud. In the dim light of the moon, I saw the glared look in mommy's eyes. She seemed sad as if she had lost her most beloved one. A soft wind was touching our faces, letting us feel the joy of a springtime weather.
About the author: Hadi Zaher was the first graduate of Quetta’s branch of Star Educational Society in the year 1999. He has an MA from the University of Wollongong in Australia and is currently a post-graduate student at the University of New South Wales.

Stories
My Grandmother Told Me

Sometimes the difference between a smart person and stupid person becomes clear when they have to face change. The same applies to a people, and a tribe. Our people have usually been stupid. They made stupid decisions. We are still paying for it.

My parents told me many stories about Havar, elders who were taken away by a group of heavily armed Middle Easterners. The group was not Arab; they were not even Muslims. They were brought to a cliff and left him out in the open to be consumed by wolves and jackals. The man was alive. He must have been very blessed. In the darkness of that night, he crawled out from underneath that pile and escaped into the mountains. He lived, and made his way back to the village. He was the only survivor the old villagers knew.

Every year the king sent poaloss to the villages. They brought with them orders, tax demands, and a lot of terror. The poaloss stayed in the best house in the village, and only the bravest men in the village went to speak to them and serve them food. The people had to comply with his orders and demand of him. He demanded for each house, and another if the king was at war somewhere. The tax was rarely collected in currency, and usually in the form of butter, wool, jewellery, cattle, crop-yield, and other valuables. If a village refused to pay, the king sent poaloss armed with sticks and guns. A visit from the poaloss forced villagers into the hills. Some families hid in their homes, many just picked up everything they could and ran up the nearest mountain. Our hills and mountains have always been our protectors.

Years passed and the king was deposed. A new king came to power. There was a change. The king’s men came into the villages to open schools. They made it compulsory for girls and boys and men and women to go to school. The people complied. The poalosses preached against it. They said the schools were intended to turn people into communists and non-Muslims. The poalosses kept preaching against education for women and girls. The first king that girls were being sent to school to be turned into prostitutes, the boys to be turned into communist soldiers. The people believed the poalosses and turned against schools. They bribed the poalosses to keep their children out of school. The king’s men entered the homes of the villagers and burned all their wheat-yield for the year to the poalosses to keep their son out of school. We were afraid. I buried a Quran in the fields because the government was taking away people found with Quran. In some areas the villagers burned down their schools and killed the teachers. In other areas, they declared jihad against the government. People said they would rather die than send their girls to school. And in some places they did that – they died but did not send their girls to school. Instead, many sent their girls and boys to the poalosses. Some of the poalosses then mistreated, assaulted and raped their girls students. Interestingly, those few who were too poor and weak to take their children out of school were lucky. Their children became teachers, pilots, engineers and soldiers.

What was the result of all that? The result was that many generations of our people, all of us remained illiterate and uneducated. We did that to ourselves. We had no access to schools for a generation and more. We burned down the schools, we killed and chased away the teachers, and brought in the poalosses. Our world was confined to the valleys of the mountains. We turned our backs to change and to the rest of the world. Our people became stupid. We suffered for those mistakes. We are paying for those mistakes.

Polooss = Police

Written by The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica

The Thousand and One Nights, also called The Arabian Nights, Arabic Al Hayâl wa al-Nihayât, a collection of largely Middle Eastern and Indian stories of uncertain date and authorship whose tales are mainly unstudied and unaffected, comprised by internal evidence—the style, the variety and geographical range of origins—are set within a frame story. Its origins are uncertain and its contents are diverse, featuring legendary stories from India, Iran, and Greece—make single tales then current; the 10th-century Persian Hazr afsâna, called Alf khurafah wa al-kuthâr; a 12th-century collection, including Egyptian tales; and the final version, extending to the 16th century and consisting of the material with the addition of stories of the Islamic Counter-Cruses and tales brought to the Middle East by the Mongols. Most of the tales best known in the West—primarily those of Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sindbad—were much later additions to the original corpus. The first European translation of the Nights, which was also the first published edition, was made by Antoine Galland as Les Mille et Une Nuits, contes arabes traduits en français, 12 vol. (vol. 1–10, 1704–12; vol. 11 and 12, 1717). Galland’s main text was a four-volume Syrian manuscript, but the later volumes contain many stories oral and manuscript sources, collected, with others, in the Breslau ed., 5 vol. (1825–43) by Maximilian Habicht. Later translations followed the Bulaq text with varying fullness and accuracy. Among the best known of the 19th-century translations into English is that of Sir Richard Burton, who used John Payne’s little-known full English translation, 13 vol. (vol. 9, 1882–86; 3 supplementary vol., 1884–85, 1889), to produce his unapproved The Thousand and One Nights and a Night, 16 vol. (10 vol., 1885; 6 supplementary vol., 1886–88).
Interview with Alim Ahmady

Alim Ahmady is a senior student of Computer Sciences in Kabul University. He has recently invented a new technology named X-net. Besides, he is the best student of the faculty and he plans to develop his invention worldwide and also to continue his studies in the U.S. He is also the co-founder of Tech-Box Professional Academy of IT Training where he teaches Networking as well.

Please give us more information about your invention. We can call it a new technology or the new generation of technology that I have named it X-net. This technology is based on Internet Protocol Version 6 (IP V6). Through this technology we can create devices which can be controlled from anywhere in the world by giving them IP. The controlling can be done by computer, phone, tablet or any other smart phones. Besides, this technology can bring us many other facilities. For example, through this technology we can create an Electronic Army or Cyber Army. We can settle them in the borders and there is no need for the physical presence of our troops there. This technology can be controlled from anywhere in the world and we can watch the scene by video feed. Another example is creating Electronic Transportation. The devices will be placed in cars and the cars can be driven automatically. A third example is creating electronic houses. For instance, if we need to travel from the U.S. to Afghanistan, the technology can turn on and off our power system, water system or the lighting system. It can adjust the temperature in the house.

How do we implement it? For example, you said that we can make a Cyber Army with it. How can we do it? This technology has two systems, one hardware system and the other software system. The hardware is the device which we make for a specific purpose. For example, we set a gun in a way that we could shoot or control the gun in any way. The gun is the hardware and the controlling system is the software which we install in our computer or other smart devices to control the gun in the battlefield. The gun can turn side to side or detect the target. I created a smart home to show how this technology works. A video is also available if you are interested to watch. The smart home was designed with a gate, power system, water pump system, and other equipment for the cars. These facilities can be controlled by a smart phone. From anywhere in the world, we can operate the smart home with our phone, we can turn off or on the lamps of the rooms. If the water in the storage tank is finished, we can turn on the pump to refill the water and as soon as we finish it, we tested it and it was successful. Also the professors from our faculty visited and discussed it.

There were some technologies in the past that could do the same tasks. What is the difference between yours and those? In the old technologies, we could not control our devices from a farther place, beyond the local region. It was impossible to control something in Afghanistan from the U.S. The good point in this technology is that this technology is based on IP. Therefore, with this technology we can even set IP in our electric heater, water pump, the gas that we use for cooking or anything you can imagine, and control it from anywhere in the world. For doing this we just to connect the internet and log into our device. For example, the electric heater can increase or decrease the temperature. And this is based on IP V6, which the older technologies were based on wireless connection that could only control a very limited area. It was impossible to control something between continents. Using IP is an improvement. The reason why IP V6 was created is that it has the capacity to support 2128 devices in the world at the same time. It means that if we decide to give the IP address to someone, we can give hundreds million of IP addresses. IP V6 helps us to go toward globalization and enables us to share things all over the world or control them.

How was your invention welcomed? In the academic area, it was warmly welcomed and encouraged for development. Also it was shared to make it known to officials and people in high positions. When it was first introduced, I received a call to meet the minister from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. At the time, they said the minister was on a business trip and they would contact me as soon as he returns. Until now they have not called and there has been no attention from their side.

Based on your descriptions, this is a useful and affordable technology. Why is it not widely used? I personally cannot develop it or start distributing it. It must be arranged with the Ministry of Communication of the country. Afterward, we need to talk with the companies that distribute IP addresses around the world, such as IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority), ISO (International Organization for Standardization), IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), to firstly create protocols and standards. Then the international rules and regulations must be observed and the process completed. It means that this technology must be changed to a center that can be developed, similar to how the U.S. Department of Defense developed TCP/IP which made the form/ type of internet. This technology must be introduced to an international organization and those who are responsible for IP should implement it. Even our government cannot develop it by itself. It has to be introduced to relevant companies that can standardize it and then implement it around the world.

How do you see the future of the technologies that you have invented? One issue was very common between those in the technology field - the dream to transfer information to anywhere in just in few seconds, like teleportation. I think if the technology you have invented would be implemented, it would not be a need for that because we could control all our things from any location just by the devices in our hands. It means that at the same time you can be in several different places, because you have control over your things. What would you do if you had enough resources? If I had enough resources, I would create a worldwide research center dedicated only to technology and research. I would take the technology one step higher from where it is now. Based on our budget, this organization would work on new issues to present something new to the technology's world. I would use all my efforts in these kinds of issues.

How do you consider the situation of knowledge and technology in the country? In my opinion, it is declining dramatically because in other countries all their systems are technology-based. Unfortunately, in Afghanistan we don’t have a proper IT system in our most important ministries. A good example can be theсистемatic database system. We still lack this system/ type of internet. This technology could only control a very limited area. It was impossible to control something in Afghanistan from the U.S. The good point in this technology is that this technology is based on IP. Therefore, with this technology we can even set IP in our electric heater, water pump, the gas that we use for cooking or anything you can imagine, and control it from anywhere in the world. For doing this we just to connect the internet and log into our device. For example, the electric heater can increase or decrease the temperature. And this is based on IP V6, which the older technologies were based on wireless connection that could only control a very limited area. It was impossible to control something between continents. Using IP is an improvement. The reason why IP V6 was created is that it has the capacity to support 2128 devices in the world at the same time. It means that if we decide to give the IP address to someone, we can give hundreds million of IP addresses. IP V6 helps us to go toward globalization and enables us to share things all over the world or control them.

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Young Afghan technology innovator

About the interviewer: Farid Shafiyi is a teacher at Star Educational Society. He studies Political Science and International Relations at lbn-Sina University. He has worked as an English teacher and private tutor in the past and aspires to be a successful diplomat in the future.

Do you think if you were in another country you could develop much more? One hundred percent “yes.” If I were in another country with this thinking, invention, and my hard work ethic, firstly the government would work on implementing this technology in their own country. Secondly, they would build a research center for me to continue developing and advancing my technology. But, unfortunately, in Afghanistan none of these are possible. Meritocracy is never considered. Overall, I am disappointed about the future of my country.

You are teaching too, how do you find your students? Are they as motivated as yourself? Yes. They are the new generation of Afghanistan and they have a keen interest in technology. I hope they invent new technologies so they will be effective on developing Afghanistan technologically. I am very hopeful of these students and all those who are in the field of education that they can bring change. But all we need is security, both physical and mental security.

About the technology: There is no attention from their side.

Do you think the future of the technology you have invented? Is there any hope for advancing the country’s technology? In my opinion, it is possible only if our young generation gets the opportunity to replace the old officials. Unfortunately, in Afghanistan we don’t have a proper IT system in our most important ministries. A good example can be the electronic Identity Cards. They must be introduced to an international organization and those who are responsible for IP should implement it. Even our government cannot develop it by itself. It has to be introduced to relevant companies that can standardize it and then implement it around the world.

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