Star Educational Society offers a wide range of nourishing English language courses that meet the needs of students now and in the future. Star’s English courses are steeped in academic language learning and designed around a distinctive learning outlook. This outlook helps students to live a life of significance and value. In addition to English language classes such as beginner classes through advance classes, teacher training class, creative writing class, translation class and TOEFL preparation class, Star has had so many other laudable educational achievements, some of which are speech contest held every other semester among students from different levels from all Star branches, essay contest in which students from past and present take part and write essays about the selected top book reading competition held across all Star branches, whose purpose is to encourage interested readers to read more and more, educational seminars and educational workshops, in particular, advising workshops on how to get scholarships. Consequently, Star has had an important role in education advancement.

Next, Star Educational Society has prodigious faculty members. It is well-known that inspirational teachers awaken us to the joy of discovery and positively impact lives. Star has faculty members who are compassionate teachers and professionals committed to their students’ growth and success as innovative, adaptable and involved education professionals. Star’s teachers have always travelled beside their students to underpin their lives’ journey and become all they have dreamed.

In addition to having extraordinary teachers, Star is the place where your opportunity of being in your dream life lives. Students who enroll themselves at Star will have something to show for their lives and will find meaning for their lives. By way of example, students who graduated even students who were in rudimentary and intermediate levels found the opportunities of continuing their education in the best universities and institutions. Furthermore, students get into Star not only for learning English language but also for benefiting from interacting with great people. In star’s educational milieu students get surrounded with so many successful and inspiring people such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, ministers and so many other educated people who are serving at Star. Students surround themselves with these successful people so that they can learn from their successes and become the best.

Besides, Star Educational Society has provided its students with remarkable services. First, Star has been one of the most munificent institutions in the country. By way of example, it has had manifold scholarship grants for the students who live in penury. Secondly, Star provides its students with superfluous materials. For instance, Star’s educational English weekly, Interstellar Bulletin, which is a source of vocabulary, reading and writing for Star’s students of all branches in Kabul, Daikundi, Mazar Sharif and Bamyan so that they can boost their English language potential. In this Weekly, Interstellar Bulletin, you can find the best of creative essays, amazing excerpts from students’ diaries, informative articles, news translation and interviews of famous and motivating people done by students and teachers from past and present and supportive friends. Besides, Star’s monthly magazine, Shahrzad, the first translation magazine in the country, whose main concentration is on culture, and literature is another phenomenal achievement. It, too, is a great source of reading and writing in the realm of students who are avid Persian readers. This monthly magazine, Shahrzad, is abounded with translation of the best English works in Persian. Thus, Persian readers are highly encouraged to read Shahrzad since it delivers the best translations of the best English works.

In closing, I would like to thank all in Star community for their efforts in making Star what it is today and what it will be tomorrow. And I encourage everyone who wants to learn English language to join Star Educational Society, for Star is miles better than other language centers in terms of quality and system. By joining Star, begin a fruitful chapter of your life.

A message by Najibullah Barati, a senior instructor at Star Educational Society

The TUTAP Electricity Line: Arguments and Positions
In 2013, Fichtner, a leading German engineering and consultancy company, was tasked by the Afghan Government to identify the priorities, timeframe, and costs associated with Afghanistan power sector development goals. The Assessment was funded by... Page 2

Huge Protest Against Afghan Government Brings Kabul to a Halt
Thousands of protesters marched in Afghanistan’s capital on Monday in the country’s largest demonstration since 2014... Page 4

Let us not change affluence into inflection
A comprehensive overview to TUTAP
First, we need to know that a successful government is one that accepts logical... Page 5

Starians speak at fundraising event for A More Balanced World
On Saturday May 7th, two Starians were in California as guest speakers at a fundraising event for the nonprofit education organization A More Balanced World (AMBW). Ali Shahidy, a Star alumnus, former teacher, former branch manager and... Page 6

See Inside
2. Personal Essays 6. Star Related
3. Opinion 7. Literary
4-5. News 8. Interview

Quote of the Week
“Love will find a way through paths where wolves fear to prey.” —Lord Byron

Begin a Fruitful Chapter of Your Life at Star

A message by Najibullah Barati, a senior instructor at Star Educational Society

Star Educational Society offers a wide range of nourishing English language courses that meet the needs of students now and in the future. Star’s English courses are steeped in academic language learning and designed around a distinctive learning outlook. This outlook helps students to live a life of significance and value. In addition to English language classes such as beginner classes through advance classes, teacher training class, creative writing class, translation class and TOEFL preparation class, Star has had so many other laudable educational achievements, some of which are speech contest held every other semester among students from different levels from all Star branches, essay contest in which students from past and present take part and write essays about the selected top book reading competition held across all Star branches, whose purpose is to encourage interested readers to read more and more, educational seminars and educational workshops, in particular, advising workshops on how to get scholarships. Consequently, Star has had an important role in education advancement.

Next, Star Educational Society has prodigious faculty members. It is well-known that inspirational teachers awaken us to the joy of discovery and positively impact lives. Star has faculty members who are compassionate teachers and professionals committed to their students’ growth and success as innovative, adaptable and involved education professionals. Star’s teachers have always travelled beside their students to underpin their lives’ journey and become all they have dreamed.

In addition to having extraordinary teachers, Star is the place where your opportunity of being in your dream life lives. Students who enroll themselves at Star will have something to show for their lives and will find meaning for their lives. By way of example, students who graduated even students who were in rudimentary and intermediate levels found the opportunities of continuing their education in the best universities and institutions. Furthermore, students get into Star not only for learning English language but also for benefiting from interacting with great people. In star’s educational milieu students get surrounded with so many successful and inspiring people such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, ministers and so many other educated people who are serving at Star. Students surround themselves with these successful people so that they can learn from their successes and become the best.

Besides, Star Educational Society has provided its students with remarkable services. First, Star has been one of the most munificent institutions in the country. By way of example, it has had manifold scholarship grants for the students who live in penury. Secondly, Star provides its students with superfluous materials. For instance, Star’s educational English weekly, Interstellar Bulletin, which is a source of vocabulary, reading and writing for Star’s students of all branches in Kabul, Daikundi, Mazar Sharif and Bamyan so that they can boost their English language potential. In this Weekly, Interstellar Bulletin, you can find the best of creative essays, amazing excerpts from students’ diaries, informative articles, news translation and interviews of famous and motivating people done by students and teachers from past and present and supportive friends. Besides, Star’s monthly magazine, Shahrzad, the first translation magazine in the country, whose main concentration is on culture, and literature is another phenomenal achievement. It, too, is a great source of reading and writing in the realm of students who are avid Persian readers. This monthly magazine, Shahrzad, is abounded with translation of the best English works in Persian. Thus, Persian readers are highly encouraged to read Shahrzad since it delivers the best translations of the best English works.

In closing, I would like to thank all in Star community for their efforts in making Star what it is today and what it will be tomorrow. And I encourage everyone who wants to learn English language to join Star Educational Society, for Star is miles better than other language centers in terms of quality and system. By joining Star, begin a fruitful chapter of your life.
One day, in art class, her teacher asked them to draw whatever they wished. Parimah drew a big shining sun with smiling red lips. It was like the sun she remembered from her village. Surprisingly she discovered how to make the sun rise and set, the sky was clear and pitch dark with stars that seemed too close to the earth. The brilliant, circular moon in the center of the black sky was painted with stars that seemed too close to the earth. The sky, as she has heard before. As the sun set, the sky put on its black clothes dotted with short and tall snowmen – an inauspicious day. Parimah and her friends went to play. Every night, she closed her eyes and wished. Parimah drew a big shining sun with smiling red lips. It was like the sun she remembered from her village. Parimah was sad. She never imagined leaving the beautiful village and moving to a city with strange people and unfamiliar places. She said goodbye to all her friends and relatives. She said goodbye to the river with pure and cold water, the tiny stones, the colorful birds, the black crows and, most importantly, she said goodbye to the apple tree. She was sure they would all miss her as much as she would miss them.

Parimah, her dad and mom were in the car. She had her doll in her hand and put her hand on Nabi’s chest. Everyone was sad and no words were exchanged. After many hours, Nabi told the driver, “Please stop here.” The car stopped in front of a dark brown door. Parimah was the first one who exited the car, stood in front of the door and tried to see her unknown future in a strange, new world.

In the first few months, Kabul was like a hell for both Parimah and Suraya. Staying in their small house, doing housework and watching television depressed them. Parimah had a small room on the second floor. Her room had one big window with a view of the yard. Most of the time, she sat on a wooden chair in front of the window and gazed at the only cherry tree which was planted in the corner of the yard. That tree was the only thing which brought Parimah any happiness. She missed her beautiful life in the village, her friends, the trees, the river and the games which she used to play. Every night, she closed her eyes and tried to keep the image of her village alive in her mind. Every morning, she woke up to the sound of her friends calling Parimah to play with them but when she opened her eyes, there was no one there. Winter, spring, summer and fall passed, it was the second year of her new life in Kabul. She was still sad and lonely. Nothing could make her happy. When snow covered the land like a bride in her white dress, she remembered the village with short and tall snow men and their carrot noses. With three months until spring, Parimah turned seven years old and it was time for her to start school. A pink backpack, a school uniform, a white scarf, black shoes with white bows, a pencil case, pencils and the books of first grade were like an invitation to a new life for Parimah. She began to feel some hope. The thought of finding some new friends at school, made the corners of her frozen lips move into a smile. She stopped gazing longingly at the cherry tree because she was busy with studying.

One day, in art class, her teacher asked them to draw whatever they wished. Parimah drew a big shining sun with smiling red lips. It was like the sun she remembered from her village. Surprisingly she discovered how to come back to her nice world. After that, she started drawing and drew each view of the village in her own way. A mud-brick house, a clamorous river, her pink jump rope, her curly-haired doll and everything which was like the alphabet of her nice village life. In the white pages of her sketch book, she made a beautiful world with her colorful pencils of blue, orange, pink, red, and green. She made the world even more beautiful than her village. Parimah learned that the happy memories of her village life with her grandfather were preserved forever in her heart and, with her art, she could recreate those feelings of joy and share them with everyone.
In 2013, Fichtner, a leading German engineering and consultancy company, was tasked by the Afghan Government to identify the priorities, timeframe, and costs associated with Afghan power sector development goals. The assessment was funded by Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction.

Key Recommendation of the Report

The Bamyan route for a new transmission line on 500 kV level. For which, it provided the following recommendations:

- It will avoid the narrow space and difficulties along the Salang pass.
- Connect further generation by coal fired power plants along the route, both Aynak and Hajigag mines could benefit from this coal energy.
- Secure power supply to Kabul and South Afghanistan by using a separate route.

Fichtner argued that although Salang pass may have "the advantage of slightly shorter time for construction and will have slightly less investment costs"; however, the route has "significant disadvantages". These disadvantages are:

- The network integration of the coal fired power plants along the Bamyan route and the power supply of Bamyan region will require an additional transmission line and the additional investment will be significantly high, adding to the total investment.
- Salang pass will also be the route for the HVDC line for CASA-1000 project, as the actual planning of CASA-1000 indicates and the construction of a third line along the Salang Pass will be very difficult, if not impossible.
- Routing all lines to Kabul on one corridor will increase the risk of losing the whole of supply for Kabul region due to one single event.

The Arguments/Position of Leadership

The arguments of demonstrative Bamyan contextual Bamyan region are difficult, if not impossible. The network integration of the coal fired power plants along the Bamyan route and the power supply of Bamyan region will require an additional transmission line and the additional investment will be significantly high, adding to the total investment.

The Demand and Position of the key Stakeholders asked for the implementation of Fichtner Report and the Bamyan Route

- Ask the Leaders of NUG to respect the independent and technical recommendation of Fichtner on TUTAP which clearly recommends the Bamyan route as the best option for long-term economic and security interests of the country.
- Ask the leaders of NUG to be transparent and accountable to all Afghans in pursuit of just and equal distribution of development resources for all Afghans including those who are vulnerable.
- Bring to justice those corrupt officials who have tried to undermine the national interest of the country by manipulating the decision-making process of TUTAP.
- We ask the international community including foreign donors and human right groups to hear and reflect the democratic demands of the people and pressure the head of NUG to respect the just demands of the people.
- Strongly condemn intimidation and threat by elements within the NUG and their propaganda tactics which tried to limit our demands to “getting electricity”. We want above and beyond anything else an Afghan administration without discrimination and prejudice.
- We stand firmly for our demands and will use every single democratic tool to ensure justice is achieved including demonstration, non-cooperation with the NUG, withdrawing representatives from the government, and closing government offices.

The TUTAP Electricity Line: Arguments and Positions

About the author: Dr. Timor Sharan received his Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Politics from the University of Essex and his Master of Philosophy (MPhil) from the University of Cambridge. Dr. Sharan was awarded funding from the U.K. Economics and Social Research Council to pursue a PhD in Political Economy of international state-building at University of Exeter in the U.K. He has worked as an international policy advisor and donor support program specialist for the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the United States Agency for International Development (US-AID). Dr. Sharan has published extensively in peer-reviewed international journals including the Central Asian Survey and Europe-Asia Studies and foreign news outlets such as the World Policy Institute.
Huge Protest Against Afghan Government Brings Kabul to a Halt

Reported By: MUJIB MASHAL
Source: The New York Times

Thousands of protesters marched in Afghanistan's capital on Monday in the country's largest demonstration since 2014.

KABUL, Afghanistan — A large demonstration against the fragile Afghan government brought Kabul to a standstill on Monday and put security forces on alert, with the authorities stacking shipping containers to block all routes to the city center and the presidential palace.

The demonstration, which was driven by ethnic Hazaras' outrage over the proposed route for a new electricity transmission line, tapped a deep well of factional tensions and frustration over the government of President Ashraf Ghani.

Though most of the protest remained peaceful, some demonstrators pelted the container blockades with rocks and acted violently toward at least five reporters. The security forces resorted to sporadic use of water cannons to disperse people.

Thousands of demonstrators marched from the west of Kabul to demand that the government abandon its decision to reroute the line, which would transmit electricity from Turkmenistan.

The line was initially supposed to go through Bamian, a Hazara-dominated central province that is one of the most deprived in the country. But the current proposed route avoids the province, instead going through the Salang Pass in Parwan Province, which protesters say is vulnerable to avalanches.

Afghanistan still relies heavily on imported electricity, as decades of persistent conflict have derailed the building of dams and kept internal energy production to a minimum. The government continues to import more than 80 percent of its power supply from neighboring countries.

The protesters see the government's decision as prejudiced against the occupants of central Afghanistan, most of whom are Hazaras, a group emerging from a long history of oppression. But Mr. Ghani's government has blamed his predecessor for the change of route, saying that two years of costly preparation work has already been done on the new route.

In a declaration before their march ended in the afternoon, the protesters demanded that the government scrap the decision on the route change and promised further demonstrations until it happened.

But much of the declaration focused on larger issues of what the protesters called "the systematic and shameful injustices that have gone on for 70 generations."

Video Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Kabul, Afghanistan, to speak out against the country's proposed route for a power line, calling it unfair to the ethnic Hazara group.

"We can tolerate a lack of electricity, but the degradation of a nation and systematic discrimination is no longer tolerable," the declaration said.

Mr. Ghani, who appointed a commission to review the project's contracts, has said that his government had little to do with it, and that he was delaying the execution of the project to ensure that Bamian receives electricity from it, even if the main transmission line does not go through the province.

"In the past 2 weeks, the government has spared no efforts in reaching out to the protesters to hear their views and engage in discussions," Mr. Ghani's office said on its official Twitter account. "The government has endeavored to address the issue in a way that the project's funding is maintained and power supply is ensured for Bamian."

In a highly politically charged environment, pinning down the facts has been difficult. Mr. Ghani, in a speech in London last week, said his government had canceled a billion dollars' worth of inadequate projects since he took office. But while calling his predecessor's decision on the transmission line "the wrong decision at the time," he still reaffirmed it, with the caveat of trying to route some electricity to Bamian.

At the forefront of the protest are leaders who were part of the cabinet in the former government that supposedly made the decision about the electrical line. They include Karim Khalili, who was Afghanistan's vice president at the time, and Saed Mudabar, who was the chief of the cabinet secretariat.

The protests have largely been organized by young activists who have tried to bring technical details to the discussion, including the idea that routing the line through Bamian could tap into coal mines for internal energy production. But many of the traditional Hazara leaders have also jumped on board. These leaders, who are either part of the government or allied with it, are trying to make up for siding with Mr. Ghani's government in a previous demonstration and using strong language against protesters.

The demonstration on Monday was the second major protest against the government in Kabul, and the largest, since Mr. Ghani took office in September 2014.

In November, thousands of people protested the beheading of seven Hazaras in southern Afghanistan by groups believed to be affiliated with the Islamic State. During that demonstration, some of the protesters reached the gates of the presidential palace, and a smaller group scaled the walls.

This time, stronger security measures were in place, with the Kabul security Garrison announcing strict guidelines on the eve of the protest. At a news conference, the garrison commander read a list of protest leaders, including Mr. Khalili, who would be held accountable if chaos erupted.

Overnight, the government used the shipping containers to block all of the main routes leading to the presidential palace from a wide radius. In addition to the security forces already deployed in Kabul, hundreds of others were brought from neighboring provinces as reinforcements.

Nasima Nizai, Iqbal Safi, Shinkai Kakhki, and some other Parliamentarians stated that there are hidden hands behind these protests.

They said, "Some hands are trying to use this opportunity and challenge the National Unity Government."

It is in a situation that changing the direction of transmitting 500 kW electricity from Bamyan to Salang resulted many widespread demonstrations and harsh reactions of the people and many government officials.

Mohammad Mozaqaf, second vice president of the executive branch, and Mr. Danesh, second vice president, announced that if the government changed the direction of transmitting TUTAP project from Bamyan to Salang, they would stop their coordination with the government.

In the meantime, Ata Mohammad Noor, the governor of Balkh, also stated "TUTAP must be transmitted through Bamyan, and if it passes through Salang, I will stand against injustice."

Last week, in a big demonstration, thousands of Bamyan residents requested the transmitting of TUTAP from this province.
An urgent need to resolve conflicts through logic and reasoning

First, we need to know that a successful dispute settlement is that which accepts logical findings. It is never wrong if a democratic government brings reforms and listens to its people’s just demands, nor will it undermine its authority. In fact, a government’s willingness to adopt a strategic importance to its people: users. Under this method the real legitimate and international constitutional and executive violence.

Reasoning and its institutionalization should have a strategic importance to the pleaders. Using force over the forfeit and misconstrued government, may help them reach their goals, but the breakthrough to the general tone or will be established, as a result, this new trend will provide for those with more power, and to substantially avoid discrimination and de- letion policies. Should the government fail to oblige with the constitutional provisions, the consequences of such actions, to the interna- tional community, will be disastrous. The interna- tional community, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, and intergovernmen- tal organizations, such as the European Union, and other international supporters of such projects in Afghanistan, as a result, these projects must be implemented to consoli- date and accommodate human rights, not to extend injustice and discrimination. In fact, those who understand the role of Hu- man Rights in international relations be- lieve that implementation of development and service projects by the international financial organizations is one of the most significant tools to expand Human Rights; therefore, they cannot neglect the humani- ties’ regulatory guidelines.

According to the mentioned resources, we need to explore that which of the routes is most logical and significant tools to develop Human Rights; financial organizations is one of the most and servicer projects by the international lieve that implementation of development to extend injustice and discrimination. In development projects, and secondly, these generally are the financial supporters of the development, facilitation of ground resolved this dispute. However, we will see, transit of electricity by the international relations be- to the national economy, at a long run. Regarding to the concerns that are raised, we need to remind that during the implementation process of the project, if it is decided that the 300 KV line string should be transferred through Bamyan-Maidan route, and no second bidding is required. This is because part of the transit, which line is shared by both the routes and for the remaining part of the route, the contract of the winner company can be legally charged in accordance with the new route, and this authority has been given by the law govern- ing the project to the National Procurement office, which is functioning on behalf of the government officials is that the Salang line will not increase people’s access to electricity, but the passage of the line from Bamyan will increase people’s access to electricity in Tala and Bartak, Saigum, Panjshir, and Darra-e-Soof stations. In fact, by implementing the project, the balanced development, and social justice will be ap- plied, which will lead to national integration and convergence, eventually elevating peo- ple’s allegiance to the central government. Otherwise, adopting the opposite approach would mean that in the future the line will be considered as sheer discrimination which is the seed of discord, divergence, and instability.

In the end, we have to say that there is no other way but accepting responsibility for the implementation process of the project, if it is decided that the 300 KV line string should be transferred through Bamyan-Maidan route, and no second bidding is required. This is because part of the transit, which line is shared by both the routes and for the remaining part of the route, the contract of the winner company can be legally charged in accordance with the new route, and this authority has been given by the law govern- ing the project to the National Procurement office, which is functioning on behalf of the government officials is that the Salang line will not increase people’s access to electricity, but the passage of the line from Bamyan will increase people’s access to electricity in Tala and Bartak, Saigum, Panjshir, and Darra-e-Soof stations. In fact, by implementing the project, the balanced development, and social justice will be ap- plied, which will lead to national integration and convergence, eventually elevating peo- ple’s allegiance to the central government. Otherwise, adopting the opposite approach would mean that in the future the line will be considered as sheer discrimination which is the seed of discord, divergence, and instability.

In the end, we have to say that there is no other way but accepting responsibility for the implementation process of the project, if it is decided that the 300 KV line string should be transferred through Bamyan-Maidan route, and no second bidding is required. This is because part of the transit, which line is shared by both the routes and for the remaining part of the route, the contract of the winner company can be legally charged in accordance with the new route, and this authority has been given by the law govern- ing the project to the National Procurement office, which is functioning on behalf of the government officials is that the Salang line will not increase people’s access to electricity, but the passage of the line from Bamyan will increase people’s access to electricity in Tala and Bartak, Saigum, Panjshir, and Darra-e-Soof stations. In fact, by implementing the project, the balanced development, and social justice will be applied, which will lead to national integration and convergence, eventually elevating people’s allegiance to the central government. Otherwise, adopting the opposite approach would mean that in the future the line will be considered as sheer discrimination which is the seed of discord, divergence, and instability.

In the end, we have to say that there is no other way but accepting responsibility for the implementation process of the project, if it is decided that the 300 KV line string should be transferred through Bamyan-Maidan route, and no second bidding is required. This is because part of the transit, which line is shared by both the routes and for the remaining part of the route, the contract of the winner company can be legally charged in accordance with the new route, and this authority has been given by the law govern- ing the project to the National Procurement office, which is functioning on behalf of the government officials is that the Salang line will not increase people’s access to electricity, but the passage of the line from Bamyan will increase people’s access to electricity in Tala and Bartak, Saigum, Panjshir, and Darra-e-Soof stations. In fact, by implementing the project, the balanced development, and social justice will be applied, which will lead to national integration and convergence, eventually elevating people’s allegiance to the central government. Otherwise, adopting the opposite approach would mean that in the future the line will be considered as sheer discrimination which is the seed of discord, divergence, and instability.
On Saturday May 7th, two Starians were in California as guest speakers at a fundraising event for the nonprofit education organization, A More Balanced World (AMBW). Ali Shahidy, a Star alumnum, former teacher, former branch manager and co-founder of C Branch, was invited to speak about his personal experiences as a recipient of a scholarship from AMBW. Kara Lozier, a longtime volunteer and friend of Star Educational Society, spoke about the tremendous impact of providing financial support to students around the world.

Ali Shahidy shared his personal story of becoming a women’s rights activist and delaying his university studies to support his family so his younger sisters could return to school. With the financial support of AMBW, he was able to pursue his passion for psychology and begin his undergraduate studies in that field at Norwich University in Vermont. Ali is in his third year at Norwich University, where he holds many leadership positions and led initiatives to address street harassment, literacy and other social issues. He is now a program manager and co-founder of C Branch (AMBW). Ali was the first Afghan selected for the annual American Institute on Political and Economic Systems held in Prague; he was chosen to have a fireside chat with Madeleine Albright, the U.S.’s first female secretary of state; and, just two weeks ago, he received the Trailblazer Humanitarian Award from the Center for Civic Engagement at Norwich University.

Kara Lozier spoke to attendees about her experience working with international students for the past ten years and how her passion for working with Afghan students, in particular, was born. She was introduced to the efforts of AMBW when she was helping Ali Shahidy to find additional financial resources to support his studies in the U.S. and has been collaborating with them since that time. Since the theme of AMBW’s fundraiser was “What happens after you donate,” Kara shared the poignant stories of three young people she has worked with and the life-changing impact made as a result of the funding they received for university studies.

One of the stories that Kara shared was Masooma Masroori’s. Masooma received full funding to study at the Asian University for Women (AUW) in Bangladesh. As an Afghan refugee living in Iran, when Masooma graduated from high school in 2004, the Iranian government had banned university education for Afghan refugees. She worked and took private courses for five years until she found the opportunity to pursue her degree at AUW. She became a human rights and civil society activist during her university studies, where she held many leadership positions and led initiatives to address street harassment, literacy and other social issues. She is now a program officer at the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization where she works on causes related to ethnic conflict, women’s empowerment, peace and reconciliation. Masooma’s story demonstrated the ripple effect caused when scholarships are created to support serving students who otherwise would not be able to pursue a university education. Kara said, “When we help a talented and motivated young person to get their education, we are not just helping one person. We are helping one person who will go on to help many other people.”

Attendees were very moved to learn about Ali’s journey and were inspired by the work that Kara is doing. AMBW provides modest support to 150 students in twelve different countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Uganda and Ethiopia. The fundraising event held on May 7th in southern California was attended by over 150 people and raised enough funds to support 10 to 30 students for the next year. The event included multi-cultural dance performances from Mexico, India and Iran, live music, a Persian concert by Dr. Farimah Shahriz, and delicious Persian and Indian food. AMBW founder and director, Mandy Fazeli, said, “Each year we try to host something different for our annual fundraising event. This was our most ambitious one and we are pleased with the number of people who attended and the amount of money we raised. We are especially pleased by the number of new supporters who joined us today.” Ali and Kara were honored to be present and to help AMBW to promote the great work they do around the world.
Music was forbidden, singers were frowned upon, and the act of singing was deemed equal to bringing dishonor to the family. Even the open-minded families who brought singers from far away places for their weddings and child-birth celebrations, fed and placed those singers separately, and treated them as less deserving than other guests. As a teenager, I used to sing songs all day long when I was the family shepherd, running up and down the mountains. As far away places for their weddings and child-birth celebrations, fed and placed those singers separately, and treated them as less deserving than other guests.

My firstborn was still a young baby when I visited my parents. The following day, as I cared for my baby in the goolkho, my brother walked in, closed the door, and pleaded with me:

Come on aaghai, let’s sing a ghazal before I take hookah and charcoal for father’s guests.

We were in a long corridor, and it was all quiet. We sat there for those brief moments, and broke out in songs, like the old days, like we sang in the mountains.

On another day, years earlier, we were carrying meal up the Akhta valley for my father and other men from the village who were there to collect firewood for the coming winter. We delivered the meal and then set off on our descent. We stopped to rest by a few large rocks. He sang, and then I sang, and then we sang together as our voices echoed in the valley below.

She Walks In Beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that’s best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:

In every raven tress,
Which waves in every raven tress,
That is the true nature of her face,
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.
And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A heart whose love is innocent!

When We Two Parted

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever the years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder, thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.
The dew of the morning
Sunk, chill on my brow,
That thy heart could forget,
In secret we met
Of what I feel now.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o’er me...
Why went thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well..
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.
In secret we met
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?
With silence and tears.

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.

Lord Byron

Lord Byron’s famous love poetry is almost overshadowed by his notorious life. In famous love poetry, few individuals are as complex as our next subject, Lord George Gordon Noel Byron 1788-1824. Of all the poets to ever put pen to paper in famous love poetry, few attracted as much opprobrium and fascination in equal measure. He was controversial, brilliant and iconoclastic, as much for his literary fame as his social notoriety. Byron has even been called the first known example of the modern day superstar. Long before the advent of the mass media and Hollywood, his combination of stylish film star good looks, aristocratic bearing, searing poetry, scandalous society affairs and total contempt for the hypocrisy of his times made him both revered and reviled. Born with great prepossession in spite of the handicap of a lame foot, Byron’s contributions to famous love poetry and the English Romantic Poetry genre has made his name a metaphor for romantic appearance and temperament. His best works from ‘Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage’ (1812), which won him instant fame, to ‘The Vision of Judgement’ (1822) exhibited drama, romance and moving lyricism. He was also a most gifted satirist who displayed the ability for swift narration and vivid description. Byron’s place as a literary great who wrote famous love poetry is often compromised by the notoriety of his turbulent and scandalous life, and contemporary and critical opinion diverged widely on his true place in the poetic pantheon. To Goethe, ‘Lord Byron is only great as a poet, as soon as he reflects, he is a child’ WhileMatthew Arnold in his famous Essays in Criticism imitated Byron and Wordsworth, the two greatest English poets of the 19th century. ‘Mad, bad and dangerous to know’ is the supreme Byronic epitaph attributed to Lady Caroline Lambmaybe his most scandalous love, who depicted him savagely in her ‘Glenarvon’ (1816).
Please give us a short introduction. We are Paradise and Diverse from 143Band (One-Four Three Band). We grew up in Iran as refugees and came back to our motherland, Herat Afghanistan – Diverse in 2003 and Paradise in 2007. Paradise has worked as a women’s rights activist, model, manager, singer and song writer for 143Band since 2008 and Diverse graduated from Herat University in computer science and spent two years as a lecturer there. He is a telecom engineer, as well as a producer, singer and song writer for 143Band.

How did you meet? It was a beautiful summer day of 2008 and Paradise was just back to Herat, and everything was pretty new for her, Diverse was then a Computer Science Lecturer at Herat University and Paradise worked in the Administrative Department and that was where we met each other.

Will you describe your artistic names together and it was actually Paradise’s idea to sing together. Although it was not common for a couple to sing together, but that was what we decided to do.

Where do the ideas for your lyrics come from and what gives you motivation? It comes from different sources and factors such as: news, streets, self-experience, talking in a taxi or bus! Mostly people give us the motivation and idea to do for our songs. Paradise’s cousin burnt herself because of an early marriage, so we created “Naletan” for her! Sardar was a journalist killed by a terrorist attack and we dedicated “Dead’s Gift” to Sardar and his family! All of our songs have a message and come from something that happened in our lives!

The themes of your songs are mostly about women. What is the reason? It was 2007. Paradise realized that there was a lot of terrible news about women’s problems. And we realized that there are no female rap artists to talk about the problems. So with the help of some friends and Diverse, we managed to release “Faryad e Zan,” which is the first female rap song, and it was very successful. It got a lot of media attention and a lot of NGOs decided to help more and spend more time and money on women empowerment projects. That was the purpose of what we wanted to do, especially Paradise was very happy to be doing a lot of great messages and support because of what she was doing. That’s why we continued to dedicate more songs to women’s rights and girls’ education rights.

There is a verse of your song “Faryad e Zan” that you are emphasizing the women “Not to be wife, Not to be honor (Naamoon)”, what do you want to convey by this verse? This context depends on the part before that where I say: “Don’t be wife to a man who set you on fire! Don’t be that man’s Honor!” If there is a man who does whatever he wants, cutting the wife’s nose, selling his daughters, and so many other terrible things, so he does not deserve honor! In most interviews, Paradise has mentioned that the most difficult part about violence against women is women themselves who are afraid of raising their voices! We have to fight for that and we have to educate women and make them aware about their real rights.

Once you were accused of being against ethical values of the society, especially by the video clip of “Faryad-e-Zan.” They said that you are acting like Satanists. What is your response to those who are expressing such words against you? In the song “Naletan,” I wrote in part of my lyrics the words, “I was burned by face in the name of Islam.” It is obvious that there are a lot of men, especially Mullahs, who are doing whatever they want and label it Islamic. I am not judging Islam, I am saying that there are a lot of bad Muslims. If helping women to be empowered is Satanistic, then what is it to be a seven-year-old girl in a Masjid! People say whatever they want to stop us. We have received a lot of death threats and we still continue what we wanted to do!

You have held many concerts out of the country and are familiar with musicians and singers from abroad. How does the music in Afghanistan compare to the music abroad? There are a lot of differences between music in Afghanistan and abroad. First of all, music abroad starts from early ages and is taught in school, even in kindergarten! However, in Afghanistan, it is meant to be something forbidden. We had the same music scene in Afghanistan, too but in the 1970s. Another big difference is the audience! The audience of music abroad mostly pays attention to the creativity, the voice and the message of a singer, however it is different in Afghanistan. The music tastes are also different.

What is your message to other artists who are in the same field and to your fans? Our message to artists is that we always wish them the best of luck and hope there will be unity and more cooperation between them. Our message to our fans is that we are here just because of you! You made us stronger and we are thankful. Please keep supporting us. One Four Three Band loves you.