

Justitie



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20/5 99

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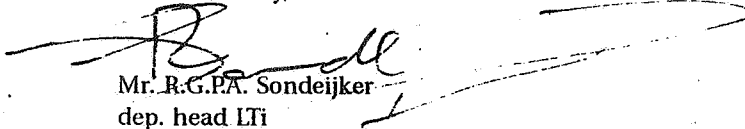
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07 mei 1999
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Chronology concerning 1998 Country Desk Afghanistan

Please find enclosed a report which gives a chronological synopsis of the most important events in Afghanistan in 1998.

The report has been published by ACBAR in Peshawar (Pakistan), an umbrella organisation of non- governmental organisations which are active in Afghanistan.

Yours sincerely,


Mr. R.G.P.A. Sondeijker
dep. head LTi

Justitie



Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst
Hoofdkantoor
Project Landendesk, Taalanalyse en informatievoorziening (LTI)

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AFGHANISTAN

CHRONOLOGIE 1998

~~Voor intern gebruik~~

OFFENTLIJKE DOCUMENT

28 april 1999

12/5/99

Hans Peitersen

Voorwoord

Dit rapport geeft een overzicht weer van de belangrijkste gebeurtenissen in 1998.

Het rapport is opgesteld door de Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR). ACBAR is een overkoepelende organisatie van non-gouvernementele organisaties die actief zijn in Afghanistan; de organisatie is gevestigd in Peshawar, Pakistan.

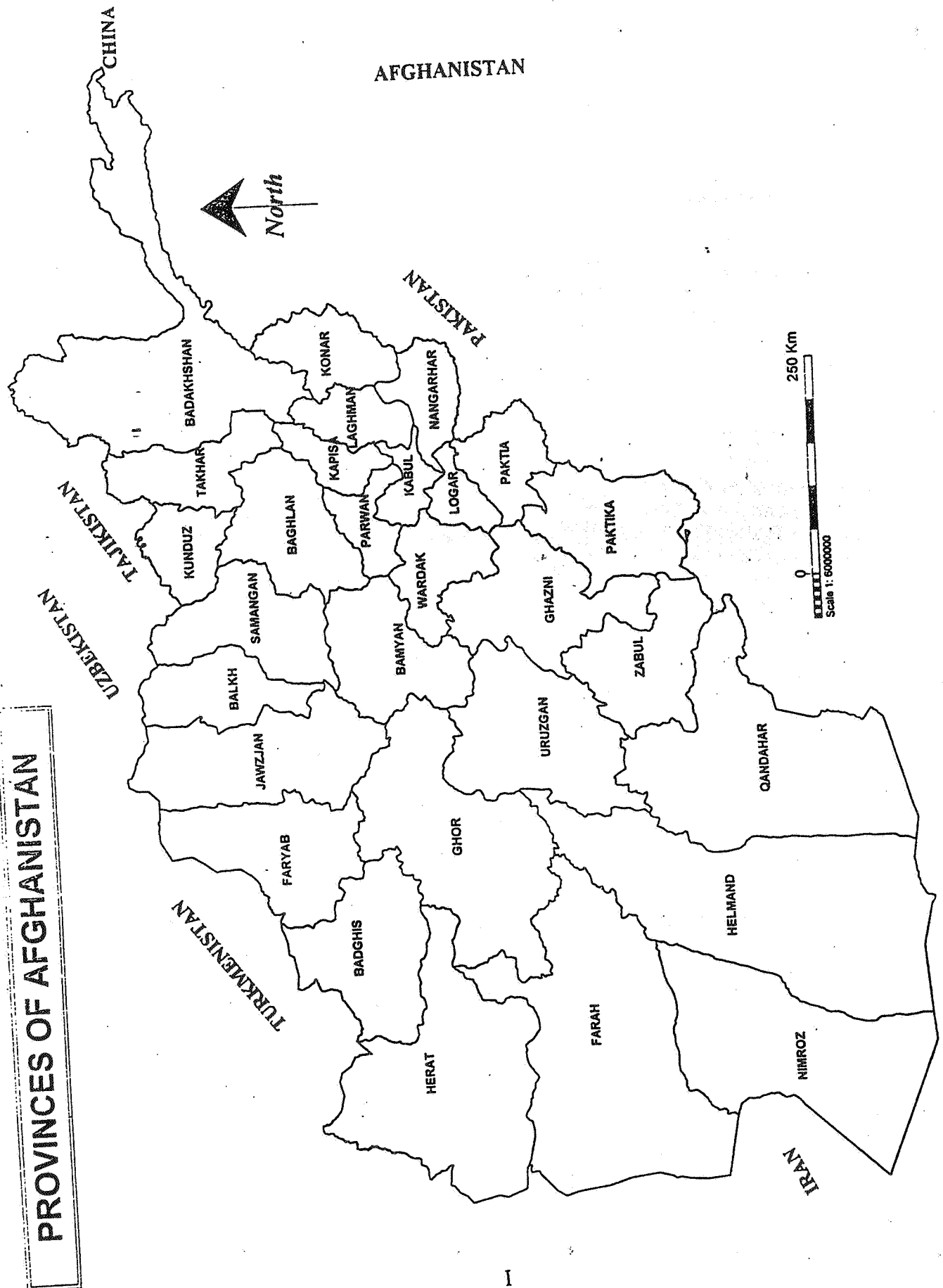
De in het rapport neergelegde informatie heeft een harde signatuur en kan in een beschikking worden gebruikt.

28 april 1999/Landendesck Afghanistan

NEWS SUMMARY 1998

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NEWS SUMMARY 1998

ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief
	Asian Development Bank
	Amnesty International
	Associated Islamic Press
	Afghanistan National Liberation Front
	Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees
	Commonwealth of Independent States
	Department for International Development, UK
	European Commission
	European Union
	International Committee for the Red Cross
CS	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
A	Iranian News Agency
	Non-Government Organisation
A	National Islamic Front of Afghanistan
FP	North West Frontier Province, Pakistan
	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
GA	Office of the Secretary General in Afghanistan
GAP	Office of the Secretary General in Afghanistan and Pakistan
	Supreme Co-ordination Council
	United Nations
DCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
DP	United Nations Development Programme
HCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
ICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
JOCHA	United Nations Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance
NSMA	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan
	United States of America
FP	World Food Programme
HO	World Health Organisation
OA	Voice of America

July:

International NGOs operating in Kabul were closed down on the deadline by the Taliban to relocate to the Kabul Polytechnic compound or close down their offices.

The European Union suspended part of its humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in protest at the harassment of aid organisations by the Taliban.

In a special announcement, state-run Shariat radio told Kabul's residents that "firstly God the Almighty is our absolute provider and he is the only solution for all problems; secondly, the biggest source to the needy is the UN and they are in full understanding with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan."

The UN announced the suspension of all but "life-saving assistance" in Kabul to protest Taliban measures against foreign relief workers.

August:

After heavy clashes, the Taliban succeeded in capturing Mazar-i-Sharif. Reports said that Taliban launched a two-prong attack with some 5,000 fighters. Hundreds of people were reported killed during the Taliban assault and severe bombing of civilian areas.

Taliban denied allegations that they had kidnapped Iranian diplomats in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, adding that the officials could be dead.

The US launched a series of cruise missile attacks on Khost and Jalalabad areas in Afghanistan, claiming the attacked areas were terrorist bases.

An Italian UNSMA official was killed in Kabul, after being shot by unknown assailants. A French official was also wounded.

Mullah Omar said in an interview "We will never hand over Osama bin Ladin to anyone, we shall protect him with blood at all costs."

September:

The UN Security Council condemned the killing of nine Iranian diplomats in Afghanistan and called for an urgent investigation.

The Government of Norway pledged some US\$1.9 million to the UN for work on Common Programming.

Taliban diverted 10,000 fighters and rushed them to Herat Province bordering Iran, where 200,000 Iranian troops had begun military exercises.

Bamyan City fell to the Taliban without much resistance from the Hezb-i-Wahdat.

October:

UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi arrived in Kandahar at the invitation of Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar.

Mullah Omar offered to ban poppy cultivation in return for recognition of the Taliban-led Afghan Government by the UN and international community.

November:

Taliban Minister for Information and Culture said that the issue of Osama Bin Ladin was closed for good as no evidence was found or produced of his involvement in terrorism.

Ancient Afghan Buddha treasures were damaged during fighting between the Taliban and Hezb-i-Wahdat forces in Bamyan; it was reported.

December:

The fourth Afghan Support Group Meeting (ASG) was held in Tokyo, Japan.

SELECTED EVENTS OF 1998

January:

Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, said that they would not allow the United States to interfere in internal affairs of Afghanistan nor would they accede to any outside pressure regarding the present state of Afghan women. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is well aware of the rights of Afghan women and they have been given all due rights under Islamic laws."

A number of people were killed and injured in a rocket attack on the Customs checkpoint by Anti-Taliban just across the Pakistan-Afghan border at Torkham.

February:

Aid agencies appealed for US\$157 million, under the Consolidated Appeal, to help thousands of Afghans whose lives have been ruined by 18 years of war.

Devastating earthquake in a remote and freezing Rustaq District, Takhar Province left an estimated 3,000 dead and thousands injured.

March:

A high level delegation of the UN and the OIC, led by UN Special Envoy, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi arrived in Islamabad on a mission aimed at opening peace talks between the Afghan warring factions.

The UN Special Envoy said the UN was considering imposing an arms embargo on Afghanistan - to be jointly implemented by the six neighbouring countries, as well as the United States and Russia.

International Women's Day (8 March) was designated to Afghan women this year to focus attention on their miserable plight; under the campaign entitled "A flower for the women of Kabul".

April:

Carol Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director, visited Kabul for talks with Taliban authorities.

Bill Richardson, US Presidential envoy, met with Taliban Head of Kabul Shura, Mullah Rabbani in Kabul; and former President Burhannuddin Rabbani, General Dostum and Karim Khalili in Shiberghan.

Taliban in talks with US officials said they were not prepared to enforce a ban on poppy cultivation until farmers have been given the opportunity to earn an alternative income.

May:

The third Afghan Support Group (ASG) meeting took place in London.

UN team arrived in Kabul to seek to restart programmes in the Kandahar region. After ten days of talks both parties signed a MOU.

India conducted a series of 5 nuclear tests on 11 May.

Pakistan conducted a series of nuclear tests on 28 May in Balochistan.

For the second time in 1998, a devastating earthquake (7.1 on the Richter Scale) ripped through northern Afghanistan - Rustaq, Chah Ab districts in Takhar and Shahr-e-Buzurg and Faizabad districts in Province of Badakhshan - killing some 5,000 people.

June:

Iran launched another peace initiative for Afghanistan in a bid to end the conflict of the neighbouring country.

The UN resented the closure of girls' schools in Kabul. Closure would have a devastating impact on the welfare of many of the city's neediest people particularly women and children.

AFGHANI EXCHANGE RATES IN 1998

The following provides some key average exchange rates on a monthly basis during 1998:

1998	Afs./Rupees	Afs./US \$	Rupees/US \$ (official)	Rupees/US\$ (market)
January	665	29,300	44.01	44.01
February	750	33,000	44.01	44.01
March	740	32,600	44.01	44.01
April	740	32,600	44.05	44.05
May	745	33,000	44.30	44.30
June	727	37,100	44.36	51.00
July	725	38,400	46.00	53.00
August	690	39,100	46.00	56.65
September	710	42,900	46.00	60.40
October	715	40,100	46.00	56.05
November	640	36,100	46.00	56.45
December	732	40,040	46.00	54.70

* these rates can only be considered "estimates" – since the Pakistan nuclear tests in May and the subsequent freezing of foreign currency accounts the open market rate has been fluctuating significantly on a daily basis: and the Afghani has also moved up and down with the situation inside the country.

AID AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

JANUARY

- 02 A team from the Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah (IDB), headed by Dr. Sulaiman Shamsuddin, visited Kabul and agreed to make available a sum of US\$220,000. This is for nutrition of malnourished children, purchase of fuel for hospitals during winter, the mass immunization campaign against polio and rehabilitation of educational institutions.
- 05 Dr. Nienhaus, a representative of GTZ, the German agency for technical cooperation, donated 7,000 quilts for newly arrived refugees in new Akora Khatak camp.
- 14 UN announced plans to start the fourth stage of its anti-polio drive in Afghanistan in April this year. The Iranian Red Crescent would provide iodine to people living in Bamyan and other central parts of Afghanistan.
- 22 The Government of India, in response to the UN call to assist Afghanistan, donated medicines worth approximately US\$0.8 million.
- 25 United States Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Karl Inderfurth said the US planned to send humanitarian assistance to the central and northern regions of Afghanistan through ICRC and UN.

FEBRUARY

- 04 Aid agencies appealed for US\$157 million to help thousands of Afghan whose lives have been devastated by 18 years of war. The UN estimated that conditions in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif, and the remote rural areas of Bamyan and Badakhshan deteriorated in 1997 and more people became dependent on relief handouts.
- 05 Islamic Republic of Iran sent 900,000 text books to northern Afghanistan for students.
- 06 ICRC and Red Cross Federation workers in Kabul prepared an enormous relief operation such as shelter, equipment to provide adequate drinking water and medical supplies as an urgent priority to the quake-hit area in Takhar Province.
- 06 The Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, offered relief supplies as Afghan opposition appealed to the international community to rush humanitarian assistance to the quake-hit area in Takhar Province.
- 08 Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer announced funding of A\$500,000 for the Afghanistan de-mining programme (UNMAPA).
- 08 European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) announced a fund of US\$2.2 to be made available as a part of immediately relief effort for quake-hit Takhar Province.
- 08 Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Qazi Hussain Ahmad, in Lahore Pakistan, appealed to the nation to provide financial assistance for rehabilitation of earthquake victims in Afghanistan.

- 09 Following, the United Nations appeal the UK Government donated US\$300,000 to the United Nations for the victims of a severe earthquake in Takhar Province.
- 12 The United Nations and the ICRC launched a joint appeal for US\$2.5 million for air-dropping relief goods in Rustaq district of Takhar Province.
- 12 The first convoy of the World Food Programme (WFP) carrying 20 tonnes of food, arrived in Rustaq from Faizabad in nearby Badakhshan Province.
- 13 The Japanese Government extended an emergency aid of 75 million Yen (US\$605,000) to the quake-hit region of northern Afghanistan.
- 16 Russia started deliveries of humanitarian aid to earthquake victims in Afghanistan. Russian emergencies Ministry sent a Russian plane packed with a mobile hospital, a team of doctors and rescue workers, water purification equipment, and medicines to Takhar Province from Doshanbe.
- 16 Republic of China donated 500 MT of wheat, worth two million yuan for distribution amongst the Afghan refugees in Pakistan.
- 17 The United Kingdom provided almost L 8.0 million pounds sterling to Pakistan to tackle the drug problem. According to a report, ninety five per cent of the heroin reaching Western Europe from the golden crescent is from Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- 17 The European Commission promised to give humanitarian aid of ECU 17 million for the Afghan victims of the ongoing conflict in Kabul, which has a relatively high proportion of females and disabled persons.
- 17 Taliban sent 24 trucks of food and medicines to cold and hungry earthquake victims in Rustaq; Taliban Information Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi said.
- 18 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) were to contribute C\$300,000 to the emergency relief effort in response to an appeal by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
- 18 Pakistan was to provide 10,000 tones wheat to Afghanistan. A Pakistan Federal Minister for food, Agriculture and livestock said that Afghan government had deposited Rs.91 million with Pakistan and the first consignment of wheat would be delivered to Afghanistan from Quetta.
- 19 France donated US\$80,000 to the ICRC for emergency air-drop in the quake hit areas of Afghanistan.
- 19 The first Red Cross airdrops of emergency aid, between 14 and 20 tonnes of supplies, landed in quake-hit Rustaq district to aid thousands in desperate need of food and shelter. It was the first time in more than two weeks that the weather had cleared enough to allow any flight chartered by the ICRC to arrive.

- 20 The United Nations received 100 tonnes of supplies from neighboring Tajikistan and delivered them to quake-hit Rustaq district.
- 21 Pakistan air-dropped 10 tonnes of relief goods over the earthquake hit region of Takhar Province in north Afghanistan.

MARCH

- 09 The first round of mass polio immunization campaign was implemented in Nangarhar. About 100,600 children under 5 received the oral vaccine. The operation was executed by Kuwait Joint Relief Committee, Peshawar, in collaboration with REMT, WHO and UNICEF Jalalabad office.
- 11 US First Lady, Hilary Clinton, and Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, criticized the treatment of women in Afghanistan. At a belated White House ceremony to mark international women's day, Clinton said "we must give voice to women in Afghanistan where women are brutalized and silenced by the Taliban". Clinton announced a US\$10 million aid package to help foreign Governments and Non-Government Organization to combat violence against women.
- 11 The Swedish Government promised to contribute US\$4.9million against the 1998 appeal. The donation would support mine action, coordination, immunization, the PEACE Initiative and FAO activities.
- 15 A seven-member Japanese delegation visited Afghan refugees, UN and Pakistani officials and discussed matters to ascertain information about the plight of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and to review Japan's assistance to assist Afghan refugees. A Japanese representative said Japan gave US\$ 5 million to Afghanistan in the financial year ending on March 31, 1998. Most of the aid was provided to UN agencies including UNHCR, UNDCP, UNOCHA, and ICRC. Besides financial assistance, Japan fully backed United Nations efforts to put an end to war in Afghanistan.
- 18 Germany and the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA) signed an agreement of US\$2.1million for 1998 to support the mine-clearance activities in Afghanistan.
- 21 Some 426 Afghan refugee families left Parachinar, NWFP for Afghanistan under UNHCR repatriation programme; each family received 300 kg flour, Rs. 5,000 and tent.
- 30 The United Arab Emirates donated relief goods worth US \$ 250,000 for the Afghan earth-quake victims. The relief consignment, consisting of 1,500 blankets, 1,000 tents and medicine, was handed over by the UAE Ambassador to Alfredo Witschi-Cestari, UNOCHA Coordinator.
- 31 The Japanese Government agreed to fund a project for implementation by the UN for repatriation of Afghan refugees. The project was to encourage the repatriation and rehabilitation of Afghan refugees to the districts of Azro and Tizin commenced with the Japanese Government announcing a contribution of US \$2.2 million for the process.

APRIL

- 11 Sacrificial meat for Afghan refugees was shipped from Saudi Arabia with the cooperation of Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and was distributed among 36,908 Afghan refugee families in various camps in Pakistan.
- 11 For the first time, a clinic for eye treatment was being established Lashkargah, Helmand Province by an international NGO. Patients would be provided free eye treatment.
- 13 The United Nation's Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) needed US\$ 23.5 million for the year 1998 for the Mine Clearance targets in Afghanistan.
- 14 "The Government of Denmark has donated US\$500,000 to WHO against the 1997 consolidated appeal to support polio immunization activities in the war-ravaged Afghanistan", noted a weekly update of UN Assistance for Afghanistan.
- 17 The British Government would give US \$12.375 million aid to Afghanistan. The aid would be channeled through the United Nations, Red Cross and various non-government organizations.
- 22 A 20 member European Union Donor Mission to Afghanistan arrived in Islamabad, to visit Pakistan and Afghanistan. The mission was to look at EU humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in the run up to the Afghan Support Group meeting scheduled to take place in London on 5 May and discuss the on-going aid programmes and future policies.
- 26 WFP appealed for a donation of US\$300,000 to purchase food for central Afghanistan.
- 28 A European mission visiting Afghanistan including Kabul said that aid might be cut unless the Taliban eased restrictions on aid delivery.

MAY

- 05 An anti-polio campaign was launched in many parts of Afghanistan including Kabul jointly by the Afghan Public Health Ministry, WHO, UNICEF and NGOs.
- 06 The US Government pledged to provide a donation of US\$0.5 million to support UNOCHA's humanitarian assistance activities in Afghanistan.
- 06 European, US and UN officials met in London on 5 May for a one-day Afghan Support Group conference, co-chaired by Britain and USA. The conference was to discuss how to improve aid to Afghanistan and curb drug production in the war-torn country. The search for a common strategy, would concentrate on "tackling drugs production and how to bring aid to the most vulnerable groups, particularly women".
- 08 The International Donors Conference on Afghanistan pledged to adopt permanent strategy on humanitarian aid and combating production of drugs. The day-long conference hosted by the United States and Britain praised the decision of donor countries to have a common policy on Afghanistan. All donors will have a united stand on principled issues such human rights, aid supplies to Afghan women and narcotics.

- 10 Supply of food aid to central Afghanistan was been suspended as the Taliban authorities attached a new condition to allow food passages. According to WFP, Taliban would allow the UN to supply 1,000 MT of food but on the condition that 200 MT of the food consignment must be given to residents at the Ghorband Pass, controlled by Taliban, and the remaining 800 MT could be taken to Hazarajat.
- 24 WHO had conducted three training courses on TB for 44 doctors, nurses and laboratory technicians from 16 to 21 May. The training took place in the conference hall of the Ministry of Public Health in Jalalabad.
- 27 A food convoy, carrying 500 MT of wheat, left Kabul for Hazarajat, Afghanistan. A second convoy left Bamyan the same day with 10 MT of wheat for Ghorband, reported in UN weekly update of UN assistance for Afghanistan.

JUNE

- 02 The European Union released 1.5 million ECUs (US\$1.65 million) of humanitarian aid for the victims of the earthquake in northeastern Afghanistan.
- 02 Pakistan sent three planes carrying relief goods including blankets, tents and food items for the quake-affected people of northern Afghanistan.
- 03 Diane Marleanu, Canadian Minister for International Cooperation, announced that Canada would provide C\$ 100,000 for emergency relief aid to victims of the earthquake in Afghanistan; a press release from the Canadian High Commission said.
- 03 The UK Department for International Development (DFID) announced £150,000 for emergency medical assistance to the victims of the earthquake in Badakhshan. According to the British High Commission the funding would be channeled through Merlin, a UK based medical relief agency to be used to support basic health centers and mobile clinics.
- 04 The US agreed to provide contract helicopters for use in delivering urgently needed relief supplies to earthquake victims. The United States would also provide additional relief as needed in response to the United Nation's call to the international community for assistance; and in coordination with international relief agencies working in Afghanistan.
- 07 Israel Government carried 15 MT of aid supplies for earthquake survivors in Afghanistan. The aid supplies, tents, blankets and medicine worth around US\$150,000 would be carried to the Tajik capital Dushanbe and handed to UN rescue teams.
- 07 Hundreds of tonnes of food were piled up at Faizabad airstrip due to lack of helicopters, which was stopping delivery of food and supplies to isolated villages.
- 09 Pakistan sent 14 trucks carrying essential food relief for the quake victims in northern Afghanistan. A Pakistani official said the trucks were ferrying 100 MT each of rice, wheat, sugar and pulses and 50 MT of ghee to the quake-hit area between Takhar and Badakhshan.

- 09 Another round of Anti-Polio Vaccination campaign arranged a public rally in Eastern Afghanistan to create awareness. Campaign was arranged by UNICEF, other regional and international NGOs in three Eastern Provinces of Laghman, Kunar and Nangarhar.
- 10 The European Commission expressed its condolence to earthquake victims and made available aid up to ECU 1.5 million (Rs. 73.22 million) for survivors of the disaster.
- 11 UN and the ICRC issued a second urgent appeal for helicopters for the victims of Afghanistan's earthquake; the response to an earlier appeal was totally insufficient.

JULY

- 02 Pakistan donated Rs. 10 million to the Taliban administration for road repairs in Kabul
- 02 A Taliban official said that US museum authorities had pledged financial support to Taliban plans to rehabilitate the national museum in Kabul.
- 15 Another 95 families from various refugee camps in Pakistan were repatriated.
- 16 Lakhdar Brahimi, UN special envoy, while addressing a news conference in New York accused Taliban of not fulfilling the conditions as agreed with the UN in May this year.
- 16 A senior Taliban official told aid workers to shift to the Kabul Polytechnic compound or close down. Planning Minister Qari Din Mohammad said: aid groups have until 19 July to show a willingness to move. He said those ignoring the deadline would face the consequences. "We Muslims believe God the Almighty will feed everybody one way or another." The Minister said "if the foreign NGOs leave then it is their decision. We haven't expelled them."
- 19 International NGOs operating in Kabul were closed down on the deadline by Taliban to relocate to Polytechnic compound or close down their offices.
- 20 The European Commission's Kabul office was forcibly closed down by the Taliban
- 20 The European Union suspended part of its humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in protest at the Taliban harassment of aid agencies, a spokesman for the European Commission said
- 20 The United States Government handed over 16 of 40-seat passenger buses to help the United Nations Mine Action Programme transport de-mining teams in Afghanistan.
- 21 The Government of Pakistan donated some 1,000 tents to the Taliban government for helping internally displaced Afghans.
- 22 The UN Security Council condemned the forced withdrawal of international aid organizations from Kabul and supported UN efforts to maintain relief operations in their absence. The Council also repeated its condemnation of the Taliban's "continued abuse of rights of women and girls, particularly in the areas of health and education," said Council President Serge Larva of Russia.

- 22 The United Nations announced the suspension of all but "life-saving assistance" in Kabul to protest Taliban measures against foreign relief workers.
- 22 France appealed to Taliban authorities to adopt a soft approach towards foreign aid agencies in Kabul, enabling them to carry out their humanitarian activities. "We can only hope that the authorities are aware that if the aid does not reach the population anymore, the situation will be very difficult because there are urgent needs to be met."
- 23 The Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) would soon launch an important campaign to help the needy people in Afghanistan.
- 23 In a special announcement, state-run Radio Shariat told Kabul's residents that "firstly, God the Almighty is our absolute provider and he is the only solution for all problems. Secondly, the biggest source of relief to the needy is the UN and they are in full understanding with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan."
- 30 Taliban showed readiness to hold talks with the UN on any subject, including the issue of NGOs. Qari Din Mohammad, Minister of Planning, refused to say if the Taliban would reverse their decision to relocate International NGOs to the Polytechnic compound.

AUGUST

- 05 Afghanistan's national currency rose from Rs.134 for 100,000 Afghanis to Rs.155, gaining in value, as reports of Taliban advances in the north trickled down.
- 12 The UN Coordinator for Afghanistan announced that international NGOs would be allowed to return to Kabul to resume their activities from their existing office locations. According to Taliban sources, representatives of both the NGOs and the Taliban are committed to resolving all outstanding issues by August 31.
- 17 Taliban allowed ICRC to fly to the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.
- 18 WFP completed distribution of 122 MT of wheat flour to 1,500 vulnerable people in Uruzgan Province.
- 20 The US asked non-Muslim staff working with Afghanistan-based NGOs to leave the country in view of serious threats directed against them.
- 21 WHO in Afghanistan reported serious and widespread outbreaks of cholera in different parts of the country. More than 10,000 cases of acute diarrhoea were registered in 59 health facilities in Kabul. From Baghlan Province 3,500 cases of severe acute diarrhoea with 102 deaths, and from Takhar Province 300 cases with 8 deaths had been reported.
- 27 Pakistan Telecommunication Company PTCL and PT&T Afghanistan signed a service agreement in extension of tele-com services to the PT&T of Afghanistan through a newly established 120 Channels digital Radio link between Peshawar and Kabul.
- 30 ICRC said it would continue its mission in Afghanistan on humanitarian grounds, if Taliban ensured protection.

SEPTEMBER

- 03 An American telecommunication company signed US\$419 million deal with Taliban to set up a network of cellular phones all over the war-ravaged country in next three years. In the first stage, with an investment of US\$175 million, mobile phone services would be provided in 14 Provinces, and in the second stage, involving an investment of US\$244 million, services would be extended to 300,000 subscribers in the whole of the country.
- 09 The Government of Norway pledged to grant US\$1.9 million for Afghanistan Common Programming (ACP): while at an ACBAR extra-ordinary General Assembly session being held on September 11 with special reference to ACP to discuss the current situation to Afghanistan, held under the auspices of ACBAR.
- 10 Taliban Minister Qari Dcn Mohammad said that it was safe for Western aid groups to return to Afghanistan and we completely guarantee safety for NGOs return.
- 13 Mullah Mohammed Omar ordered the lifting of an economic blockade on the central Afghan province of Bamyan after the its fall to his militia. He also urged the UN and NGOs to rush food and other humanitarian assistance to the people of Bamyan.

OCTOBER

- 14 Netherlands Government announced a donation of US\$2.5 million for health, sanitation and water supply projects in Afghanistan through ICRC.
- 14 The Government of United States, donated US\$73,500 for coordination to the Afghan NGO Coordination Bureau (ANCB) through UNOCHA. The Government of Germany granted US\$50,000 for veterinary support to the Mine Dog Centre.
- 25 A wheat shortage suspended the production of bread at bakeries run by aid agencies in Kabul affecting the poorest people.
- 27 Pakistan promised to supply 0.6 million MT of wheat to Afghanistan in 1998-99 to meet the staple food requirement of the country.

NOVEMBER

- 03 The ECHO Office announced in Brussels last month that there would be no more funding for Afghanistan unless the Taliban stopped their discriminatory treatment of Afghan women and agreed to a radical change in their rigid policies.
- 04 The Taliban allowed 10 western aid agencies to resume operations in Kabul: according to the report the agencies had agreed to re-locate to the Polytechnic compound.
- 08 A group of foreign investors arrived in Afghanistan to explore venues for investments in various fields to help in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The traders, from France, Germany, Britain, South Africa, Pakistan and the United States, were accompanied by experts in the fields of telecommunications, oil and gas, and road construction.

- 15 The Taliban signed an agreement with a Greek oil and gas company on exploration in Afghanistan. According to reports Mawlawi Ahmad Jan, Minister of Mines and Industries, visited Greece and signed the accord with the company CCC. The company would soon start oil and gas exploration in Herat Province of Afghanistan.
- 22 A United Nations team left Islamabad for central Afghanistan to assess the food supply and security situation in Bamyan Province.
- 26 United States officials of higher education agreed to revive an agreement under which the medical colleges of Kabul and Nangarhar were affiliated with a US university.
- 28 The Afghan Support Group (ASG) was due to meet in Tokyo early December to review political, security and humanitarian assistance programmes in Afghanistan – attended by some 100 representatives from international organisations, NGOs and donor countries.

DECEMBER

- 01 The NWFP Government asked Taliban administration to establish flour mills in Jalalabad Nangarhar, Province for grinding imported wheat to solve the food problem.
- 01 After security assurances from the Taliban, the local UN staff started supplying food to the people in Bamyan. According to UN officials, food supplies are being carried from Yakawlang to Bamyan before snowfall created difficulties.
- 04 To protect historical and archaeological monuments and recover stolen antiques from abroad and return them to the Kabul Museum a multinational group from Italy, Norway, Greece, Japan and Bhutan have formed a consortium to help Taliban preserve its archaeological sites and monuments in Kabul, Herat and Bamyan. According to reports, Ambassadors of these countries met Taliban Ambassador Maulavi Saeed-u- Rahman Haqqani at the Italian embassy, Islamabad and pledged to finance relocation of stolen Afghan antiquities, help return them to Kabul and repair the historical Kabul museum.
- 08 The ASG, after a two day conference in Tokyo, said in a statement that humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan depended on a minimum respect for international law and standards and called on all Afghan parties for an immediate cease-fire and establishment of a multi ethnic representative Government in Afghanistan.
- 12 Japan pledged US\$ 3.5 million for Afghanistan. Some US\$1.5 million for NGOs helping refugees inside Afghanistan while US\$1.0 million would go to ICRC and UNHCR.
- 14 The UN launched the 1999 annual appeal for Afghanistan seeking US\$185 million for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. The appeal included US\$115 million for projects to save lives, ensure human rights and build sustainable livelihoods and the remaining US\$70 million for rebuilding the war devastated infrastructure.
- 24 The Taliban government signed an agreement with Turkmenistan for the import of 600 MT of liquefied natural gas. The Turkmen gas would be supplied to the energy deficient areas of Afghanistan, which often face serious fuel and food shortages.

MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

JANUARY

- 02 Forces loyal to Ahmad Shah Masoud reached the outskirts of Tagab district. Fighting was reported in Gul Dara and Tagab.
- 07 Forces of Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, routed Taliban from two strategic areas. Bala Murgab and Ghor-Mach districts in Badghis Province and claimed to be in complete control of Qaisar district bordering Faryab Province.
- 26 Heavy clashes between Taliban fighters and forces loyal to Abdul Rashid Dostum erupted in the northern Afghan town of Baghlan.

FEBRUARY

- 05 Taliban planes bombed positions of Ahmad Shah Masoud in Panjsher valley. Jabul Siraj and Charikar.
- 06 Some 3,000 men belonging to Ghor Province expressed their readiness to fight against the enemies of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.
- 07 Taliban planes dropped six bombs on Taloqan near the site of a deadly quake and killed 17 people.
- 22 Opposition troops captured the town of Alisheng in Laghman province. 32 Taliban and opposition soldiers were killed and 50 injured.

MARCH

- 10 Commander Ahmad Shah Masoud and Gen. Dostum, reportedly put their forces on alert to fight a decisive battle to gain control of some strategic parts in Northern Afghanistan and also the capital Kabul as soon as the weather and conditions for ground fighting become favourable.
- 14 Heavy fighting between the forces of Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum and Hezb-i-Wahdat led by Ustad Karim Khalili over distribution of power in Hairatan and Mazar-i-Sharif, was reported. Reports said latest fighting badly affected peace and security in the city and people remained indoors after incidents of looting and plundering in parts of the city.
- 15 A temporary cease-fire came into effect in Mazar-i-Sharif between the warring factions of Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum and Hezb-i-Wahdat, who had pounded each others' positions with heavy artillery and light machine guns in Mazar-i-Sharif city. As many as 60 fighters from both sides were killed; and international aid workers were planning to evacuate the city after rival factions waged street battles.
- 15 A Junbish-i-Milli spokesman said that their forces had captured more than 300 fighters from the rival group Hezb-i-Wahdat along with the Hairatan's Commander in the latest round of fighting in Mazar-i-Sharif.

- 15 Forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud launched an attack on Taliban positions in Guldara, north of Kabul, injuring two Taliban fighters.
- 29 Taliban jets pounded the northern city of Pul-e-Khumri, killing five people including women and children and wounding dozens more; said a spokesman for the anti-Taliban alliance.
- 29 The Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar ordered his troops not to kill opposition soldiers taken prisoner during fighting in Afghanistan, Radio Shariat.
- 30 Ahmad Shah Masoud released 65 Taliban prisoners, said a spokesman for the ICRC.

APRIL

- 06 On the eve of the Eid-ul-Azha, Taliban released 118 prisoners of war. A spokesman for the ICRC said that prisoners would be taken by bus from southern Kandahar to central Afghanistan.
- 12 The Taliban seized four posts in a fresh offensive against the forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud in Guldara, about 25 Kilometers north of Kabul. It was the first major offensive in recent months from the Taliban side.
- 23 In a goodwill gesture, Hezb-i-Wahdat released five Taliban soldiers from its Bamyan stronghold in central Afghanistan.

MAY

- 03 Ten bodies of Taliban soldiers, killed in heavy fighting north of Kabul, have been flown back by the ICRC.
- 04 Fighting broke out in Takhar Province, northeast Afghanistan, between Taliban and the opposition forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud. The clashes took place at Bangi district killing at least five soldiers and injuring dozens of others from both sides.
- 10 Forces of Masoud launched a massive attack against the Taliban in Takhar Province and captured three sub-districts in Ishkemish. As a result of the attack by opposition, Taliban Commander, Ahmad Badakhshani, and several other fighters were killed.
- 17 Thirty-one people were killed and 43 wounded when Taliban bombed Taloqan city of Takhar Province.
- 21 Three rockets struck Kabul airport but there was no damage or casualties. Immediately afterwards Taliban jets bombed oppositions front-lines in Charikar, 65 kilometers north of Kabul, killing several people and injuring at least 15 others.

- 21 Seven civilians were reported seriously wounded as a result of the second consecutive rocket attack by the opposition in Khawaja Rawash airport of Kabul. According to reports, fighting continued between Ahmad Shah Masoud and Taliban on the front-line in Shakar Dara and Guldara, 30 kilometers north of Kabul.
- 22 Heavy fighting was reported in Baghlan Province between Taliban and forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud. The report added that the opposition had re-captured parts of Nehrin district which had earlier been seized by the Taliban.

JUNE

- 01 Taliban troops withdrew from the Ghormach district of Badghis Province following a pre-dawn offensive by forces loyal to Abdul Rashid Dostum.
- 02 Fighting continued north of Kabul following a major offensive by forces loyal to Dostum. The report added that four rockets launched by Dostum forces slammed into an area close to Kabul airport, but no casualties were reported.
- 02 Fighting was reported between the Taliban and forces of Abdul Rashid Dostum in Qalai Zal district of northern Kunduz Province.
- 03 Six people were killed and another five wounded when two rockets hit the Afghan capital Kabul on 3 June. Kabul had come under rocket attack for the past four days from the forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud and most of the attacks targeted civilians.
- 05 Three children were killed and six others wounded when nine rockets slammed into Kabul city. Fighting continued between Taliban and forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud only 12 miles away from Kabul.
- 24 Heavy fighting continued in Tagab some 29 Kilometers northeast of Kabul. According to Taliban, opposition soldiers suffered heavy casualties during a ferocious day-long battle.
- 25 Leaders of Taliban opposition groups were engaged in extensive consultation to chalk out a joint strategy against the Taliban. Ahmad Shah Masoud, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Abdul Rab Rasool Sayyaf and Abdul Rashid Dostum held a series of meetings in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif and discussed matters related to launching a joint offensive against Taliban in different Provinces.

JULY

- 01 Heavy fighting was reported to have erupted on two fronts in Afghanistan between the Taliban and the northern alliance rivals with the Taliban claiming to have repulsed opposition attacks, state radio reported.
- 08 A Taliban commander Abdul Latif, with 200 troops joined the opposition forces in northern Afghanistan.
- 11 Taliban launched major new offensives against General Abdul Rashid Dostum in Faryab Province.

- 12 Whilst Taliban forces consolidated their hold over Faryab Province which fell to them, Mullah Mohammad Omar issued a warning to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to stay out of the Afghan conflict and refuse the use of their air bases and aircraft to the anti-Taliban northern alliance.
- 14 Forces loyal to the northern alliance of Afghanistan claimed recapturing Faryab after fierce fighting.
- 18 Anti-Taliban forces regained a town in northern Faryab Province from the Taliban after heavy fighting.
- 19 The Taliban claimed that they shot down a jet fighter which was bombing their positions in the northern Faryab Province.
- 20 Forces of the Taliban recaptured Juma Bazaar town in Faryab Province after heavy fighting with opposition forces.
- 20 The Taliban suffered heavy losses when Governor Helmand Province, Mullah Amanullah, Chief Commander Mullah Juma of Herat Province and another commander Mullah Amir Mohammad were killed during fighting with the forces of opposition in Faryab Province.
- 23 Fighting in northern Afghanistan gained further momentum after clashes broke out between the Taliban and forces loyal to Commander Ahmad Shah Masoud in Baghlan Province. 81 persons were reported killed in the fighting.
- 23 Heavy fighting further intensified among the forces of Northern Alliance and Taliban amid reports that they had sent fresh reinforcement to the Northern areas for strengthening their position.
- 28 Abdul Khair Hakimi, an opposition commander, together with 1,500 fighters, switched over to the Taliban side.

AUGUST

- 02 Taliban forces capture Shiberghan, the last military headquarters of Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, to close in on Mazar-i-Sharif. According to reports, Dostum fled to Termiz in Uzbekistan.
- 03 Fresh reinforcements were sent from Bamyan for the defence of Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan. According to Ustad Muhaqqiq, 1,000 fighters were sent to Mazar to defend the city.
- 05 Forces loyal to Ahmad Shah Masoud launched a big attack on Taliban positions in Broke district of Baghlan Province and captured 12 military posts.
- 05 Fighting between Taliban and opposition forces erupted at Daulatabad district of Mazar-i-Sharif.

- 05 The Taliban captured Saripul Province in northern Afghanistan.
- 06 Taliban flew in troops and arms to Shiberghan from Kandahar, Herat, Khost and Kabul. According to a Taliban official, about 1,000 Taliban soldiers were flown in from Kandahar to Shiberghan.
- 08 After heavy clashes, the Taliban succeeded in capturing Mazar-i-Sharif. Reports said Taliban launched a two-pronged attack on Mazar-i-Sharif with some 5,000 Taliban fighters. Hundreds of people were reported killed during the Taliban assault and severe bombing of civilian areas.
- 08 All religious madrasas were closed for two weeks in Nowshera, Peshawar, to enable students to rush to Kabul in support of the Taliban, as news of the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif reached them. Reports indicated that 1,000 religious students left for Afghanistan to reinforce the Taliban.
- 11 More religious madrasas in NWFP were closed and 3,000 students left for Afghanistan to join the Taliban. Reports added that Taliban sources in Peshawar were planning to send a force of 10,000 youths to Afghanistan.
- 12 Taliban captured strategic Taloqan, capital of Takhar Province.
- 18 Forces loyal to Ahmad Shah Masoud captured 230 Taliban troops, a diplomat at the Afghan embassy in Tajikistan reported.
- 30 Taliban attacked opposition forces in northern Kapisa Province and captured Nejrab a key base of rival commander Ahmad Shah Masoud.

SEPTEMBER

- 01 Forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud recaptured Nejrab pass in Kapisa Province and claimed to have killed 50 Taliban in the fighting.
- 07 Forces loyal to commander Ahmad Shah Masoud launched a two-pronged attack on Kabul and took firm control of Shakhar Dara, Gul Darra, Haussin kot, Qilla Murad Beg and Khairkhana some 25 Kilometers north of the capital Kabul.
- 10 Taliban fighters launched a major offensive on a key opposition bastion central Afghanistan capturing several vital bases in the Shiite Moslem held Bamyan. According to the report Taliban seized Saighan and Kahmard towns in Bamyan and captured at least 48 Wahdat soldiers.
- 12 The Taliban diverted 10,000 fighters from different areas and rushed them to Herat Province bordering Afghanistan, where 200,000 Iranian soldiers had already begun military exercises.
- 13 After the heavy artillery Bamyan fell to Taliban according to the report the city was occupied without much of resistance by the Hczb-e-Wahdat.

- 16 Taliban opposition forces staged a series of counter attacks around the central town of Bamyan, which the Taliban seized on 11 September and recaptured the local airstrip. UN sources reported.
- 21 According to a report Ahmad Shah Masoud had gathered 5,000 troops and was preparing for an attack on the capital Kabul and his positions were said to be as close as 25 to 30 kilometers from Kabul.
- 21 A gathering of Ulema was summoned for the guidance of Mullah Omar and over 1500 Ulema from all over Afghanistan reached Kabul to decide the line of action to counter the growing Iranian threat.
- 22 Two hundred opponents led by Muhammad Abdul Samad Aghai joined the ranks of the Taliban along with tanks and mortars in Turkmen- Dara area of Ghorband, Parwan Province.

OCTOBER

- 01 A military aircraft belonging to Ahmad Shah Masoud defected to the Taliban landing at Kabul airport. The pilot and three other crew surrendered to the Taliban. The aircraft had brought arms from Masoud's base inside the Tajikistan border.
- 02 Taliban fighter planes bombed, four times, the opposition stronghold of Charikar in northern Badakhshan Province killing at least 10 people and wounding several others.
- 03 The Taliban claimed to have captured Nejrab, Kapisa Province and the Kotal-i-Khawak linking Panjsher valley with Takhar Province from the forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud.
- 04 Forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud recaptured the strategic town of Taloqan. According to the report, two important Taliban commanders Mullah Naeem Akhund and Mullah Abdullah were killed and about 250 Taliban troops were taken prisoner at Taloqan.
- 05 Forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud captured the strategic town of Andarab in Northern Afghanistan after heavy fighting, which left 100 Taliban soldiers dead and nearly 1,000 wounded or captured in the fighting.
- 06 Heavy fighting was reported in the Bazaar of Imam Saheb in Kunduz Province. Taliban were reported to have taken hundreds of civilian hostages.
- 07 Forces of Masoud claimed to have seized two districts in northwestern Faryab Province.
- 07 Taliban and opposition alliance agreed a week-long cease-fire to allow them to start negotiations. The cease-fire was agreed in Saudi Arabia and the two sides agreed to exchange prisoners.
- 08 The Taliban and Ahmad Shah Masoud formally started an exchange of prisoners, each side would release 1,000 prisoners of war. According to reports both sides exchanged 106 prisoners at the front line in Shakar Dara, 25 kilometres north of Kabul and for this purpose Taliban and opposition agreed on a week-long cease fire.

NOVEMBER

- 10 Some 500 armed Hezb-i-Wahdat combatants were reported to have joined the Ahmad Shah Masoud forces in Takhar Province in northern Afghanistan.
- 12 Seventy civilians were killed and more than 100 injured during a Taliban aerial bombardment at Taloqan in northern Afghanistan. A further 38 residents were shot dead in neighbouring Takhar Province and Koprak village as the Taliban was forced into retreat by forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud.
- 13 Mohammad Akbari, head of Hezb-i-Wahdat party, surrendered to Taliban in the district of Waras in central Bamyan Province.
- 13 Forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud captured two districts near Bangi in Takhar Province and about 1,000 Taliban soldiers defected to Masoud.
- 17 Taliban opposition claimed to have captured the strategic district of Nijrab in Kapisa Province, about 85 km north of Kabul. Reports said 10 civilians were killed in Taliban aerial bombardments in residential areas surrounding Nijrab.
- 22 Heavy fighting erupted in the northern Provinces of Baghlan and Faryab, with five people dead and 21 injured; and fighting continued in Nahrin town in Baghlan Province.
- 24 Heavy fighting was reported in Salang Tunnel. Forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud had advanced 15 kilometres north of the tunnel, which links northern Afghanistan. Some 50 Taliban troops were taken prisoners and another 30 killed in the fighting.
- 28 Forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud claimed to have captured Imam Sahib, a strategic border district, from the Taliban in Kunduz Province. Reports added that 65 Taliban troops were killed and 150 imprisoned while 20 opposition soldiers were killed and 30 injured.
- 28 Another leader of Hezb-i-Wahdat Khodaidad Irfani surrendered to the Taliban with all of his fighters and announced his support for the Taliban.
- 28 Taliban launched at least 12 aerial bombardments on Charikar, 64 kilometers north of Kabul; there were no reports of casualties.

DECEMBER

- 02 Taliban opposition claimed mass uprising against the Taliban in areas of northern Provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan and Faryab; and 150 Taliban fighters captured.
- 03 Taliban jets bombarded opposition areas in Takhar and Kunduz Provinces. Seven civilians were killed and another 12 wounded in Taloqan, capital of Takhar.
- 14 Masoud forces claimed capturing Khanabad, a key district in Kunduz Province. Reports added that eight Taliban positions in Khenjan, Baghlan Province, were also captured.
- 29 In fighting between the Taliban and Ahmad Shah Masoud in Faryab Province at least 15 opposition soldiers were killed and 30 wounded.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

JANUARY

- 02 The Taliban, rejected the cease-fire offered by Burhanuddin Rabbani and the northern alliance during the holy month of Ramazan and called it a tactic to take advantage of any pause in fighting.

FEBRUARY

- 05 The US State Department in its annual Human Rights report blamed Taliban and northern alliance for human rights abuses saying that violations are rampant in Afghanistan.
- 04 Iranian special envoy on Afghanistan Alaudin Brojerdi started a fresh Afghan peace bid.
- 05 The European Commission launched an international campaign against what it called Afghanistan's sexual "apartheid", which had forced the country's women to give up work and education. A group of 50 women including EU Humanitarian Affairs Commissioner Emma Bonino signed a petition asking the United Nations and other international organizations to work towards restoring "the respect of fundamental human rights for women in Afghanistan".
- 06 Amnesty International (AI), welcomed the campaign "A flower for the women of Kabul" launched by European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs Emma Bonino and other prominent women, who dedicated Women's Day (8 March) to Afghan women.
- 18 Taliban appointed Sayed Mohammad Haqqani as Deputy Foreign Minister to replace Sher Mohammad Stanckzai, who had not yet been given any new position.
- 27 Pakistan urged the United Nations to establish its credibility, as an impartial mediator in Afghanistan, said Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan.

MARCH

- 02 Eng. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar arrived in Mazar-i-Sharif, to discuss the recent situation with the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance.
- 06 The Foreign Ministers of three Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan, Kyrgistan and Tajikistan after their meeting in Dushanbe, urged all Afghan factions to stop military activities and pave way for national reconciliation.
- 08 A spokesman of Hezb-i-Islami said, that Hekmatyar had not formally joined the Northern Alliance but if Taliban refused to accept the opposition's peace proposal then Hekmatyar's faction would join the Northern Alliance and give a boost to the opposition.
- 17 Taliban and the Northern Alliances agreed to participate in Intra-Afghan dialogue being held in Frankfurt, Germany in a bid to seek a lasting solution to the nearly 20 years old Afghan dispute. This was claimed by Dr. Amanullah Rasool, leaders of the Community of Peace Loving Afghan Intellectuals.

- 17 Hezb-i-Wahdat termed the US support to Taliban as a "sign of political defeat" for the Clinton Administration.
- 17 A Junbish-i-Milli spokesman said that negotiations were in progress between Junbish and Hezb-i-Wahdat in Mazar-i-Sharif by the ulema and elders to resolve the issue through dialogue.
- 12 The Taliban renewed their call for granting them the Afghan seat in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Taliban's Charge d'Affaires, Mawlawi Tayyab, said "we expect that the OIC will give heed to our just demand and surrender the seat to Taliban", controlling 80 percent of Afghanistan, including Kabul.
- 12 Gulbuddin Hekmatyar reportedly refused to join the Northern alliance. After his arrival in Mazar-i-Sharif he put forward a peace plan on holding of general elections, formation of a National Army and establishment of an Interim Government, which were rejected by the rival groups.
- 13 Haji Abdul Qadir, the Chairman of the eastern Shura, was tipped to become the Afghan Prime Minister after Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's refusal.
- 15 UNOCAL, Vice President, Marty Miller, in a gathering of more than 300 oil and gas executives at a convention in Ashkabad, said that the Afghan conflict was a major obstacle to a double pipeline project, which would bring Turkmen energy resources to markets in South Asia.
- 15 Iran and Saudi Arabia expressed concern over the regional insecurity, widespread smuggling of narcotics from Afghanistan and its negative effects on the region, Radio Tehran.
- 18 OIC Foreign Minister endorsed Pakistan's stand that all states should immediately end supply of arms and ammunition to all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan.
- 18 The Herat-based Iranian consulate was attacked with a hand grenade by two motorcyclists, injuring one non-diplomatic staff of the mission and causing minor damage to the building.
- 20 A high-level joint delegation of UN and OIC led by UN Special Envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, arrived in Islamabad on a mission aimed at opening peace talks between Afghan warring factions.
- 21 The United Nations was seeking clarification from the Taliban about their recent restrictions on foreign Muslim women working for aid agencies in Afghanistan. A senior UN official said that a number of UN members had already been refused visas as they were female Muslims travelling alone on UN mission and several others had been asked to leave Afghanistan.
- 29 UN envoy for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi lashed out at Taliban and the Northern Alliance for continuing fighting in Afghanistan and accused both the groups of not showing sincerity to a peaceful solution of the Afghanistan problem.

- 29 Sher Mohammad Stanakzai, who was replaced by the Taliban leadership as Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister sometime back, was appointed Deputy Minister of Health in Kabul.
- 29 Lakhdar Brahimi, UN special envoy to Afghanistan, said that the UN was considering imposing arms embargo on Afghanistan. It would be jointly implemented by the six neighboring countries of Afghanistan, as well as Russia and the United States. According to him it would be a major step towards peace. He also added that the UN invited all the neighboring countries to discuss implementation of the issue as the world body cannot implement it alone.
- 31 Mokhtar Lamani, OIC's permanent representative to the United Nations, who was accompanying the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, in an exclusive interview with a Pakistani Newspaper, said that there was no divergence of views between the UN and the OIC on Afghanistan. Both organizations were working for the same goal, an end to the war and stability in Afghanistan.
- 31 Leaders and representatives, of different Afghan anti-Taliban groups, in their meeting, urged the UN envoy for Afghanistan to take immediate steps to reopen the highway to Hazarajat, where hundreds of thousands of Afghans were reported as being in a precarious condition due to an acute shortage of essential commodities, and due to the persistent blockade of the highway by the Taliban.
- 31 United Nations Secretary General's special representative to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, left for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to hold talks with leaders of those countries on the Afghan issue.

APRIL

- 01 The United Nations special envoy to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, said that UN planned to invite Afghan leaders for a meeting in Ashkabad, Turkmenistan, to chalk out a peace plan.
- 01 Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, arrived in Kabul for talks with Taliban in a bid to ease conditions for aid workers. "We conveyed to the Taliban the UN Secretary General's concern over restrictions on girls education and urged them to respect UN conventions which say that education is the right of all" Bellamy said after her meeting with the chairman of Taliban's Ruling Council, Mullah Rabbani and Deputy Foreign Minister Sayed Mohammad Haqqani.
- 02 An official of Taliban said that Taliban had appointed a five member team to work with a similar five member group from the opposition alliance under a UN initiative to find a solution for the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.
- 03 The Taliban refused to attend peace parleys in Ashkabad, capital of Turkmenistan.
- 05 The UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, after his discussions with northern alliance leaders in Ashkabad, announced that all Afghan leaders present in Ashkabad agreed to take part in a reconciliation commission in Islamabad.

- 11 United Nations special envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, left Islamabad, for Tehran for consultation with the Iranian Government on peace efforts in Afghanistan. According to a report the UN move for peace received a major boost in the week when Washington announced it was sending a cabinet level team to Kabul (scheduled on 17 April) to persuade the Taliban to change their ultra-conservative laws against women.
- 14 The Taliban welcomed US special envoy Bill Richardson's forthcoming visit to Afghanistan, saying it would help restore the war-ravaged country's links with the outside world. Taliban would discuss schooling for girls with US Ambassador Bill Richardson when he visited Afghanistan but would not discuss Osama Bin Ladin, a Taliban official said.
- 16 US Presidential envoy Bill Richardson met a leader of Hezb-i-Wahdat, Dr. Rasool Talib, at the American Embassy in Islamabad. Talib said Richardson expressed Washington's keen desire to help end the war in Afghanistan and bring peace to the country. Richardson also added that dialogue should take place to reach an agreement on all issues including a cease-fire, release of prisoners and free flow of humanitarian assistance to the war ravaged country.
- 17 US negotiator and President Clinton's special envoy Bill Richardson arrived in Kabul, met Taliban President Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, and then met with Northern Alliance leaders, former president Burhanuddin Rabbani, Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum and Karim Khalili, in Shiberghan. Key leaders from both sides agreed to have face to face negotiations by April 27 in Islamabad under the auspices of UN and OIC. They also agreed on a cease-fire before the talks. US envoy for Afghanistan added that both sides agreed to discuss an indefinite cease-fire, war prisoners exchange, allowing women access to education, and removing the blockade of central Afghanistan at this Steering Committee of Ulama.
- 18 US envoy Bill Richardson visited Kabul and arranged for a United Nations team to visit Afghanistan on 20 April to discuss differences between the Taliban and the world body. Taliban refused to accept Witschi-Cestari who was assigned to lead the UN negotiating team and urged the United Nations to send someone else. Taliban described Witschi - Cestari as anti-Taliban, who openly opposed their conservative policies particularly those against women.
- 18 Only seven hours after the Taliban authorities agreed building peace measures in their talks with US presidential envoy, the Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in a message from Kandahar said that only the proposed Ulama Commission is capable of resolving the Afghan conflict. "The Talk of political negotiations between the Taliban Islamic movement and the opposition is premature", the report added.
- 18 Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub said that the next Steering Committee on Afghanistan would be held in Tokyo.
- 18 Taliban in their talks with the US officials said that they are not prepared to enforce a ban on poppy cultivation until farmers have been given the opportunity to earn an alternative income.

- 19 Taliban announced the release of 10 political prisoners as a goodwill gesture to accompany the peace deal; Radio Shariat.
- 19 Taliban accused northern opponents, Shura-e-Nazar, of breaking a United States brokered cease-fire after only one day, by attacking Taliban positions in Tagab northeast of Kabul.
- 19 The Taliban nominated five senior leaders for the Steering Committee meeting while the opposition named a team of nine persons.
- 19 The United Nations withdrew from talks with Taliban leadership and canceled the planned visit of a UN team to Kabul, scheduled for 20 April, after they rejected the demand for replacing senior UN official Alfredo Witschi-Cestari.
- 22 Ahmad Shah Masoud freed 51 Taliban militias as a goodwill gesture to accompany the peace deal.
- 26 Afghan factions attended the US-brokered peace talks in Islamabad that began. A tentative agenda earlier drawn up by coordinators from the two sides included a cease-fire, exchange of prisoners and unhindered flow of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.
- 29 Afghan negotiators, who inched their way towards the Ulema Commission, failed to make any headway on a cease-fire, a food blockade and POWs exchange.

MAY

- 03 Peace talks between Afghan warring factions collapsed, amid a deadlock over lifting a Taliban siege of central Hazarajat to allow food convoys.
- 04 A UN delegation arrived in Kabul to try to mend fences with the Taliban and find a way to restart programmes in the south of the country. Senior UN official, Martin Griffiths, who arrived from New York to lead the team, told a news conference in Kabul that his mandate was laid out by UN Secretary General Kofi Anan.
- 06 The US State Department official responsible for South Asian Affairs, Karl Inderfurth, urged Taliban and the Northern Alliance to resume the peace talks.
- 06 The Taliban Ambassador in Islamabad, Abdul Hakim Mujahid, stated that the Taliban had decided to lift the blockades of roads to Hazarajat and the UN would be allowed to supply 1,000 MT of food to the people of this area.
- 10 The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) would launch fresh initiatives to end the deadlock in the Afghan peace talks; OIC sources said.
- 10 Taliban reacted strongly to ousted Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani's participation in the ECO Summit in Almaty and described the act as an insult to Afghanistan. "We will not accept any decision by the ECO Summit about Afghanistan" said Taliban Ambassador Abdul Hakim Mujahid.

- 14 A team of UN officials left Kabul after 10 days of talks with Taliban officials aimed at resolving a series of disputes. Delegation leader, Martin Griffiths, said the team had made great strides in the talks sparked by a UN pull-out from southern Afghanistan.
- 23 A five-member team of the Afghanistan Foundation, an organization in Washington, started a three-week visit to the region to keep up the momentum of US Ambassador Bill Richardson's peace mission in Afghanistan.
- 24 A high-level US research mission on Afghanistan blamed Pakistan, Iran and Russia for the upheavals in Afghanistan.
- 24 Taliban urged Islamabad to show restraint in conducting the nuclear test as it would not be in the interest of Pakistan.
- 25 Gulbuddin Hekmatyar condemned India's nuclear tests saying that people of Afghanistan would join hands with Pakistani brethren if India tried to commit any aggression.
- 25 The Taliban announced that their powerful and feared religious police department had been up-graded to full ministerial status. By order of the supreme leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, Mawlawi Alhaj Qalamuddin becomes Deputy Minister and current boss, Mawlawi Mohammad Wali, took up the portfolio of the Minister. Ministerial changes announced also include the renaming of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to Haj and Religious Affairs.
- 29 The Taliban leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, rescinded a decree granting amnesty to former Afghan communists and directed the administration to take punitive action against all those involved in objectionable activities.

JUNE

- 03 Speaking at a news conference Burhanuddin Rabbani on 9 June urged the Taliban to resume peace talks after a month long break, which was abandoned by Taliban in Islamabad.
- 04 Pakistan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Siddique Khan Kanju, visited Kandahar and Mazar-i-Sharif and urged the rival Afghan factions to resolve their differences peacefully.
- 10 The Taliban, lodged a protest against the United Nations for inviting the ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani to the Drug Summit in New York and accused the world body for adopting double standard policy; the State radio reported.
- 14 Iran launched another peace initiative for Afghanistan in a bid to end the conflict in the neighboring nation. Iran's permanent envoy to Afghanistan Alaeddin Brujerdi arrived in Mazar-i-Sharif, and met with military strongman Ahmad Shah Masoud and other leaders of the Northern Alliance.

- 15 An official of UNDCP, at the end of United Nations General Assembly's Special Session on the world drug problem in New York, told journalists that in 1997 an estimated 2,800 MT of opium was produced in Afghanistan and that the Provinces currently under the control of the Taliban provide 96.4 percent of Afghanistan's total opium production.
- 15 Pakistan launched fresh efforts to pave way for the resumption of talks between the Afghan warring factions. Pakistan State Minister for Foreign Affairs Siddique Khan Kanju had visited Taliban and leaders of the Northern Alliance as part of the new initiative.
- 16 The United Arab Emirates (UAE) offered economic support to the Taliban if they stopped fighting in Afghanistan. Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khalifa Ibn Zayed Ibn Nahayan, made the offer in a meeting with the Taliban Prime Minister Mohammad Rabbani in Abu Dhabi.
- 16 The Taliban ambassador in Islamabad announced that they would not hold talks with the rivals under the Ulama Commission as the opposition alliance had disrespected the Ulama Commission.
- 17 UN resented closure of girls' schools in Kabul. The schools closure would have a devastating impact on the welfare of many of the city's neediest people particularly women and children. Meanwhile the Taliban decision "violates the letter and spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Taliban and UN officials on May 13" said a statement issued by the Office of the UN Coordinator for Afghanistan in Islamabad.
- 21 Pakistan Government was going to evacuate 70,000 Afghans living in out of city settlements in Islamabad. Pakistan Interior Minister completed the plans to evict Afghans with the help of the army.
- 21 A European Union mission expressing concern over growing export of drugs to Europe called for effective measures by the Taliban authorities to stop opium production in areas under their control.
- 25 The illicit flow of arms and money to Afghanistan's warring factions from abroad continued unabated during the past three months, a United Nations report said.

According to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan predicted a grim future for war shattered Afghanistan saying that unless its neighbors stop supporting the war effort with military aid and Afghan warriors put down their weapons and talk.

JULY

- 06 Iran opened a new air base in the northeastern Mashhad region in a bid to strengthen its military air power near the border with Afghanistan.
- 05 A traditional jirga of various tribes from Kunar Province of Afghanistan welcomed formation of third force and its chief Sayed Ishaq Gillani. The Jirga was attended by elders from Sadaat, Mohmands, Safis, Mashwani, Gujars, Salarzais and Nooristan tribes.

- 12 The Taliban authorities, invited ulema from tribal areas located along the Pak-Afghan border to visit Kabul and see the steps taken by Taliban for the purpose of enforcement of Shariat in the country.
- 15 Taliban accused opposition forces of employing Israeli military advisors to train northern-based anti-militia soldiers.
- 16 Taliban claimed Alam Killi Khokayazai tribe area of the Mohmand Agency to be part of Afghanistan.
- 16 Leader of Hezb-i-Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said holding of talks among Afghan groups is the only way to end continuing fighting and restoration of peace in Afghanistan.
- 18 Tribal leaders from throughout Afghanistan assembled in Bonn to try to find ways to end Afghanistan's civil war.
- 31 The Taliban government announced appointment of Mawlawi Abdul Hakeem Mujahid as ambassador and permanent representative of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to UN. The seat of Afghanistan has been kept vacant in the UN General Assembly up till now.

AUGUST

- 05 Russia and Uzbekistan urge the Taliban to stop their offensive in northern Afghanistan.
- 05 The Taliban reject the possibility of any future dialogue with the northern alliance, saying that in the past their rivals have repeatedly backed out of their commitments and are no longer trustworthy.
- 05 The UN Security Council called for peace talks and warned the warring factions of the deteriorating humanitarian situation.
- 06 Pakistan's former interior minister Nasserullah Babar called upon Iran to keep out of Afghanistan and let the Afghans sort out their disputes themselves.
- 08 Iran warned against foreign military interference in the civil war in Afghanistan, saying it would not allow the region's security to be trifled with. "No country should interfere in Afghan affairs and waste its resources and forces in this devastating war" Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said in an apparent reference to Pakistan.
- 09 Iran condemned the Taliban for holding 11 Iranian diplomats who were captured in Mazar-i-Sharif after the Taliban took over the city.
- 09 Taliban denied allegations that they had kidnapped Iranian diplomats in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, adding that the missing officials could be dead. According to Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil the diplomats were not in the Iranian consulate when Taliban forces entered the city.

- 10 Tajikistan, with the help of Russian troops, was reinforcing its border with Afghanistan. According to reports, Russia had 25,000 troops stationed in Tajikistan to support the government and guard the border.
- 10 According to reports, the Taliban opened fire on two Iranian border posts. Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander said Iran would respond to any act of aggression.
- 11 Russia warned Pakistan for helping the Taliban, saying it was a threat to international peace and security. The Russian Foreign Minister Valery Nesterrushkin alleged that Pakistani experts were helping plan strategy and provide equipment to the Taliban.
- 14 Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani in an interview with a London-based Arabic newspaper said that he had provided the UN Security Council with irrefutable proof of Pakistani involvement in the Taliban offensive in Afghanistan. "Pakistan's 48th Brigade based at Quetta has taken part in the fighting" and "Afghanistan is facing an offensive launched by Pakistanis assisted by so called-volunteers" he added.
- 16 Iran warned Pakistan of a miserable future in Afghanistan as the row over Islamabad's support for the Taliban put a severe strain on diplomatic ties between the two neighbours.
- 27 Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum asked Turkey, seeking Ankara's support in his struggle against the Taliban movement, Turkish officials said. It was the first time that Turkey had openly called for action against the Taliban militia.
- 30 US Under Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth renewed talks offer to Taliban to settle several issues including activities of Osama bin Ladin. Inderfurth said that US has no enmity with the Taliban, Afghanistan or Islam, rather the aims of the attack on Afghanistan was to destroy the bases of Osama bin-Ladin who was threatening not only US, but also the international community.
- 30 Iran prepared 70,000 troops along with heavy equipment for military maneuvers along the Afghanistan border as tensions remained high between Tehran and the Islamic Taliban militia.
- 30 Pakistan Interior Minister and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Leader Naseerullah Babar called for recognition of Taliban government.

SEPTEMBER

- 01 Benazir Bhutto called for breaking off relations with the Taliban led government in Kabul if they failed to release the Iranian diplomats.
- 02 Mullah Mohammad Omar offered to release three Iranian prisoners as a gesture of goodwill following Pakistan's intervention on behalf of Iran.
- 03 Five Iranians were released by Taliban in a gesture aimed at easing tension with Tehran.

- 07 Taliban sent a letter to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan asking him to condemn Iranian military maneuvers near the Afghan border and also their threats to a sovereign country.
- 09 Iran has said that it was seeking a peaceful resolution of its conflict with the Taliban in Afghanistan and called on the US not to interfere in the affairs of the region.
- 10 Missing Iranian envoys found dead in Afghanistan, prompting Tehran to warn it held the fundamentalist militia and Pakistan responsible for the killings. Taliban spokesman Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil told that the Iranians were killed by Taliban fighters acting without orders; and a search was under way to track down the murderers, soldiers and punish them for violating the rules of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.
- 10 The UN Security Council condemned the killings of nine Iranian diplomats in Afghanistan and called for an "Urgent investigation".
- 11 Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura urged Iran to exercise self restraint over the killing of nine Iranian diplomats in Afghanistan. Describing the killing as highly regrettable he added "I want to seek restraint from countries concerned not to take extreme action".
- 12 US, UK, Russia condemned the killing of Iranian diplomats in Northern Afghanistan and asked for a global denunciation of the same.
- 13 Iran has announced that it would stage its biggest ever military exercises along the border with Afghanistan. 200,000 men would be involved in the exercises, which were to take place later in the month. The announcement came after the admission by the Taliban in Afghanistan that nine missing Iranian diplomats were killed during its capture of Mazar-i-Sharif.
- 13 Iran demanded to hand over the killers of nine Iranian diplomats in Afghanistan and asked Taliban to extradite the murderers. Iran also threatened the Taliban with force if it failed to heed Iran's demands.
- 14 Mullah Mohammad Omar proposed talks between Afghanistan and Iran under the UN charter to sort out problems, souring bilateral relations between the two countries.
- 14 The ICRC repatriated the dead bodies of seven Iranian diplomats from Mazar-i-Sharif to Iranian city of Mashad. According to the report Taliban offered nine bodies to Iranian team but two were not accepted by the Iranian team.
- 15 An official of Taliban offered to release 40 Iranian prisoners in exchange for dozens of Taliban members taken to Iran and if Iran hands over members of the opposition including ousted Burhanuddin Rabbani and Abdul Malik.
- 17 Mullah Omar warned Iran that if it committed the mistake of launching aggression against his country and added that his country would not come under pressure from Iran despite massive Iranian army buildup along Afghan border.

- 18 Iran accused the Taliban for attacking and plundering its consulate and cultural center in the Afghan city of Bamyan and killing a local Afghan employee.
- 21 Iran has called on the UN Security Council to send a mission to Afghanistan to stop "mass killings" by the Taliban and secure the release of Iranians.
- 21 An eight nation international conference on Afghanistan was held in New York. The conference was organized by UN and aimed at reducing tension between Iran and Afghanistan and finding ways and means for a durable peace in Afghanistan. The Conference was attended by the US, Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. A joint Statement by all countries demanded of Taliban to obey international humanitarian law and respect human rights and women rights and endorsed a planned visit to the region by UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi in October to revive talks between Taliban and their opposition
- 22 Saudi Arabia announced that it had recalled its Charge d'Affaires from Kabul and demanded the departure of Afghanistan Charge d'Affaires from Riyadh. The expulsion was linked to the Taliban's support of bin Ladin.
- 22 Taliban Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar said that the world, including the UN, should not expect any concessions from the Taliban if it continued to deny recognition to their government in Afghanistan.
- 24 A Taliban representative said that Diplomatic efforts by eight countries to end the civil conflict in Afghanistan were futile unless the Taliban were included in the talks; and "if there is no representative of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan the group will not do any result like it didn't do any results in the past".
- 29 Mullah Mohammad Omar rejected the idea of broad based government which had been adopted by the six neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, the USA and Russia.
- 29 About 2,000 Islamic scholars urged Taliban to exercise restraint in the face of threats from Iran. The scholars, ending a four day meeting convened by Taliban chief Mullah Mohammed Omar, recommended that the entire Afghan Nation be ready for a holy war if Tehran goes ahead with its attack threats.

OCTOBER

- 02 Taliban administration accused Iranian military aircraft of violating Afghanistan's airspace. According to the Taliban 10 Iranian military helicopters entered Afghanistan's airspace over the southwestern Nimroz and Herat Provinces.
- 04 UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi commenced his planned visit to the middle Asia region to defuse tension between Tehran and Taliban.
- 04 Taliban designated Mawlawi Shahabuddin Dilawar to replace the present Afghan Ambassador in Islamabad, Saeed- u-Rahman Haqqani who was the Afghan Charge d'affaires in Riyadh. According to the report Pakistan refused to receive the new Ambassador.

- 06 Mullah Mohammad Omar offered to ban poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in return for recognition of the Taliban-led Afghan government by the UN and international community.
- 06 UN Special envoy for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi expressed his appreciation for Iran's restraint in its dispute with Taliban.
- 08 A unit of Iranian Revolutionary guards clashed with Taliban forces on the Iran/Afghanistan border after the Taliban fired shots at an Iranian border post. The clashes lasted for three hours and Taliban suffered heavy casualties in the exchange and three of their border posts were destroyed.
- 08 The UN envoy arrived in Islamabad on the second leg of a regional tour to hold talks with the Pakistani officials and Taliban leadership to discuss an effective peace in Afghanistan and ease the tension between Tehran and Taliban.
- 09 Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar delivered a special message to Brahimi, renewing an invitation to him to visit Afghanistan for detailed talks.
- 10 Taliban freed another five Iranians held in Kandahar on the intervention of an Afghan trader, Syed Jalal based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Iranian prisoners were flown to UAE in a special plane and were to be taken to Iran.
- 11 Taliban has agreed to release another ten Iranian prisoners on the intervention of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. The decision was announced by Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar during a meeting in Kandahar to a visiting Palestinian delegation.
- 12 Leader of the joint UN and OIC mission on Afghanistan met with the Peer Syed Ahmad Gillani chief of National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) to discuss the prevailing situation in Afghanistan.
- 14 Special Turkish envoy for Afghanistan Aydemir Erman accompanied by Turkish Ambassador in Pakistan, Halit Bozkurt Aran arrived in Islamabad to discuss Afghanistan situation with the Pakistani authorities.
- 14 UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi arrived in Kandahar at the invitation of the Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. The meeting resulted in a promise by the Taliban to release the remaining 28 Iranian prisoners. Discussions included in the seven-point agenda included such issues as: tension between Afghanistan and Iran, Iranian and Russian interference in Afghanistan, the problems of drug trafficking and terrorism in Afghanistan, the formation of a broad based government in the country, Taliban demand for recognition of their government and Osama bin Ladin's presence in Afghanistan and his involvement in acts of terrorism.
- 15 Karl Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs reiterated US demands that bin Ladin be expelled and warned that Washington kept open the option of further actions against him.

NEWS SUMMARY 1998

- 17 Taliban released 26 Iranian prisoners from jails in southern Kandahar. The released Iranians were flown to Tehran in two aircraft arranged by the ICRC. The release followed an agreement reached between the militia's supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar and UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi in Kandahar.
- 18 Taliban Supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar called for a total ban on the production, trade, stockpiling and use of landmines.
- 21 Following the UN Envoy's shuttle diplomacy, Iran agreed to pull back its forces from the Western borders of Afghanistan. According to the report, Tehran would start withdrawal of its forces subject to good will gestures from Taliban leadership.
- 20 The UN special envoy for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi left Islamabad for Iran to visit Iranian officials and persuade them to hold direct talks with the Taliban.
- 21 Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsin Amiznadeh said Iran would be ready to hold talks with Taliban if the militia took steps to accept the United Nations "Six plus two group's" demands for a cease-fire and establishment of a broad based government in Afghanistan.
- 22 Taliban had presented Proposals to the UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi for an end to the war in Afghanistan, Afghan Ambassador in Pakistan Mawlawi Saeed ur Rehman Haqqani told journalists at a reception.
- 23 The UN special envoy for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi met with Commander Ahmad Shah Masoud in the Tajikistan capital Dushanbe. According to the report Masoud in his visit with Brahimi called on the so-called "Six Plus-two" group Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Turkmenistan and Pakistan as well as China and the US to put more pressure on Pakistan not to meddle in internal Afghan affairs.
- 27 Iran would stage a military exercise on its border with Afghanistan and about 200,000 troops from the Iranian army, air force and navy would take part in the war games.
- 30 Mullah Mohammed Omar issued an edict, which warned his commanders that they would be punished under Islamic law if young boys were found carrying guns and fighting on the front lines against opposition troops.
- 30 US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Karl Inderfurth, reiterated the demand for the formation of a broad-based and multi-ethnic government in Afghanistan, Washington believed it was time the conflict in Afghanistan came to an end.

NOVEMBER

- 01 Ahmad Shah Masoud asked the Taliban to release a former governor of Western Herat Province, Ismael Khan, if they wanted the exchange of prisoners to go ahead.
- 01 Taliban rejected the possibility of the establishment of a broad based government in Afghanistan saying that the Taliban had already fulfilled the requirement of a broad based government as every ethnic group, tribe and nationality were represented.

- 02 Iran held final military maneuvers on the Afghan border but would keep troops in the highly sensitive area to combat drug smuggling and maintain security.
- 03 Mullah Mohammad Omar ordered the release of 105 prisoners from jails in the southern city of Kandahar.
- 03 Mullah Mohammad Omar and Ahmad Shah Masoud extended the fragile cease-fire for two more weeks. Reports said that both sides had agreed to release about 5,000 prisoners in the next few days.
- 04 Taliban in Kabul have lost interest in the UNOCAL Corporation on the proposed US\$3 billion gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and were now finalising discussions with the Argentine firm BRIDAS. They said that they were close to clinching a deal with them once the Government of Pakistan gave the go ahead.
- 06 Pakistan and Turkmenistan decided to send a joint mission to Afghanistan as part of the international initiatives to bring durable peace in Afghanistan. The joint mission's visit to Afghanistan would be complementary to the UN and OIC missions and exercise.
- 05 A US district court announced a reward of up to US\$5 million for the capture of Osama bin Ladin.
- 07 Russia called for immediate international action against the Taliban by terming it as a basic cause of continuation of bloodshed in Afghanistan.
- 10 Hezb-i-Islami workers staged a protest demonstration in front of the Pakistan embassy in Tehran on Islamabad's refusal to issue visa to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.
- 10 Mullah Mohammad Omar said his government was not prepared to hand over Saudi dissident Osama bin Ladin to the United States even if it endangered recognition for the Taliban as the legitimate authority in Afghanistan.
- 10 Taliban warned the United States of America against endangering the lives of its citizens abroad if Washington persisted with its bid to prosecute alleged terrorist Osama bin Ladin.
- 13 The Supreme Court of Taliban decided to extend a dead line for the production and submission of evidence against Osama Bin Ladin. November 30 had been set as the deadline and the US authorities were asked to come forward with authentic evidence against Osama and submit it to the Afghan Supreme Court.
- 17 A four-member Iranian Government delegation reached Herat in western Afghanistan to hold talks with the Taliban officials.
- 21 Taliban Minister for Information and Culture Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the issue of Osama bin Ladin was closed for good as no evidence was found or produced of his involvement in terrorism.

- 21 The Chechen government decided to formally recognise the Taliban. According to the report a high level Chechen delegation visited Afghanistan and conveyed the message to the Taliban.
- 24 Taliban Minister of Mines and Industries Mawlawi Ahmad Jan said that they had signed an accord with a South African company on copper exploration in Afghanistan.
- 28 The Taliban released the last Iranian prisoner, a lorry driver, and handed him over to an Iranian Foreign Ministry representative in Herat Province.
- 29 Iran issued a new warning to the Taliban in Afghanistan to arrest and punish the killers of Iranian diplomats in August and start peace talks with other Afghan factions.
- 29 Mullah Mohammed Omar announced that Hezb-i-Wahdat leader Ustad Mohammad Akbari, commander Khodaidad Irfani and former Junbesh-i-Milli Islami leader Nasim Mehdi would be given official responsibilities and accommodated in Taliban government.

DECEMBER

- 08 The Saudi Government refused to issue a visa to Mullah Mohammad Rabbani.
- 07 United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan proposed the establishment of a civil affairs unit in Afghanistan as part of his efforts to add new monitoring functions to the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMIA) and promote respect for minimum humanitarian standards.
- 09 Pakistan urged the international community to recognise Taliban administration in Afghanistan. Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations Ahmed Kamal said.
- 10 The UN Security Council denounced Taliban for sheltering international terrorists and violating human rights. The Council also warned Taliban leaders that it would impose unspecified measures against them unless they halted their military campaign and negotiated peace with their ethnic rivals in the northern part of Afghanistan.
- 10 Taliban stated that it would refer to Islamic law before responding to a UN resolution for a broad-based government or calls for the extradition of Osama bin Ladin. Taliban chief spokesman said the Taliban could not make a decision on women's rights, nor on the extradition of Bin Ladin, "without obtaining fatwa from the Ulema".
- 16 The UN special envoy on Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi arrived in Tehran for talks with Iranian officials to seek ways to settle the Afghan crisis.
- 25 Afghan opposition leader Yunus Qanooni left for the US on an official visit as special envoy of Commander Ahmad Shah Masoud.

SECURITY MATTERS

JANUARY

- 01 Taliban planes dropped bombs on the airport of Bamyan City, which disrupted the UN airlift of food commodities to central Afghanistan.
 - 01 Taliban jets bombed Shakadara district in the north of Kabul.
 - 07 Opposition sources claimed that Taliban, after being pushed out of Qaisar district in Faryab Province, murdered 600 civilians, including old people, women and children in retaliation for their impending defeat.
 - 10 A top Afghan mujahideen commander, Mullah Naqibullah was wounded and six of his men killed in an ambush in Kandahar. Naqibullah, who was the Corps Commander of Kandahar before the emergence of the Taliban, had cooperated with the Taliban when they first emerged in Kandahar.
- Three Afghans, including a Pakistani national, were killed and four injured in a rocket attack on the Customs checkpoint by anti-Taliban just across the Pak-Afghan border at Torkham on 14 January.
- 25 Four Taliban jets twice bombed Bamyan and targeted the positions of Hezb-i-Wahdat.

FEBRUARY

- 02 A former defense minister Mohammad Zahir Solhamal was shot dead at his residence in Helmand Province.
- 04 A heavy rocket fired by Taliban opposition exploded north of Kabul, one child was seriously injured.
- 07 An Afghan national was killed and another injured in sniper firing in Mochko, Karachi.
- 09 Two former military officers were shot dead in Baghwana area near Peshawar while travelling from Shamshato Refugee camp.
- 10 Taliban hanged a man accused of bombing a military plane, leaving the body swinging from the barrel of a tank. According to Taliban officials, the man was an employee of the Air Defence Force who had been paid to blow up a military plane. The body was taken through Kabul's streets strung from a crane hook as a lesson to other people.

MARCH

- 01 At least 21 people were killed when a passenger bus fell into the Kabul river in the Mahipar area between Kabul and Jalalabad.
- 03 30 people were killed and 300 injured due to heavy floods in Kandahar Province. The floods destroyed many villages, large areas of agricultural land and rendering thousands of people homeless.

- 06 Four Afghans, including three children, were killed when the roof of a house collapsed in Chamkani near Peshawar.
- 07 Around 3,000 people staged a noisy demonstration demanding eviction of Afghan refugees from Azad Kashmir.
- 09 Tons of snow tumbled off a mountain in north Kabul and crushed a village (Karbandi) killing some 70 people.
- 12 Taliban in Kabul detained 100 people over beard length.
- 14 Taliban and Pakistan border-guards exchanged heavy gunfire at the Pak-Afghan border (Torkham).
- 19 The former Governor of Helmand Province, Haji Ghaffar Akhundzada, was gunned down by unidentified people in Khushal Khank road, Pashtoonabad area, Quetta.
- 18 The ICRC withdrew its 19 relief workers from Mazar-i-Sharif.
- 24 Eight persons were killed and scores of others injured in violence in Mazar-i-Sharif. Three thousand people came out on the roads demanding evacuation of the city by Hezb-i-Wafidat faction.
- 30 Taliban border guards detained four Pakistani paramilitary soldiers when they crossed over the border to Afghanistan to seek help after their patrol vehicle broke down.
- 30 At least 30,000 citizens of Kabul gathered in a football stadium to watch the execution of two men accused of murder. The form of the execution was having their throats slit by relatives of the victims.
- 30 An elderly Afghan using a dagger publicly slaughtered an alleged murderer in Spin Boldak, south western Afghanistan after the Taliban militia's chief Mullah Muhammad Omar endorsed an Islamic court verdict; Taliban official sources said.

APRIL

- 05 Two men belonging to Jamiat-i-Islami were shot dead in the Chamkani area near Peshawar.
- 05 An alleged thief had his hand chopped off at a sports stadium in Kabul, a punishment approved by the Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. He was convicted of the charge of stealing a carpet, a bicycle, a tape recorder and one million Afghanis (around US\$30) from a house four months previously.
- 06 An Arab National was arrested, for crossing the Pak-Afghan border, by the political authorities of Khyber Agency and handed over to Pakistan Intelligence Agency for interrogation.

- 20 Two Afghan refugees were killed and another critically injured in a bomb blast in Miran Shah, North Waziristan.
- 24 Another convicted thief's hand was chopped off publicly in Kabul at sports stadium while more than 3,000 people watched the event.

MAY

- 02 Taliban publicly executed one murderer and flogged two whisky drinkers at the national stadium in Kabul.
- 02 About 100 people, mostly women and children, were feared to have died of starvation in Hazarajat region isolated by Taliban blockade: the UN food agency said.
- 15 For the sixth time this year more than 4,000 people turned out in Kabul to watch the right hand of a thief surgically removed in the capital's national stadium. According to a report, Sidiq Maruf was accused of stealing one million Afghanis (around US\$30).
- 22 The Afghan Consulate in Peshawar was engaged in discussions with the Government of Pakistan on the issue of releasing Afghan prisoners detained in Pakistani jails. Pakistan Interior Minister had agreed to extend all possible cooperation to pursue the cases of Afghan prisoners and asked all Afghans with relations in Pakistani jails to submit their particulars to Afghanistan's Embassy in Islamabad.
- 24 Nearly 500 Afghan men have been punished, with lashes, under strict Islamic laws after being found, by Taliban police, to have trimmed their beards; 110 women were also punished after the police found them to be inadequately covered: residents and official sources claimed.

JUNE

- 13 Taliban publicly hanged two alleged Iranian agents accused of murdering two religious militia soldiers in Herat Province. According to the Taliban, they had been recruited by Iran for "subversive and terrorist activities".
- 18 Russian guards policing the frontier between Tajikistan and Afghanistan shot dead two Afghan smugglers and seized four kilograms (8.8 pounds) of heroin, the Russian forces press office reported.
- 20 The Taliban publicly chopped off the right hand and left foot of a man convicted of snatching 17 million Afghanis (US\$500) from three travelers at gunpoint recently.
- 24 Four Taliban were killed and three others injured when unidentified terrorists attacked a Taliban post with rocket launchers near Afghan-Pak border.
- 29 Fifteen rockets landed in Kabul killing four people and wounding several others. Four of which landed at the combined military and civilian airport of Khawaja Rawash. The others hit a densely populated residential area on the south-eastern edge of the city.

JULY

- 03 Three people died and five were injured when a bomb exploded in the shop of a scrap dealer, in the Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan.
- 09 Afghanistan's former Defense Minister of Najibullah regime, Nazar Mohammad, was shot dead by unknown assailants in Satellite Town, Quetta.
- 10 The United Nations suspended flights carrying aid workers and supplies into Kabul, one day after a rocket narrowly missed a UN plane and passengers.
- 11 Four rockets landed in Kabul airport. Opposition fighters vowed to continue rocket assaults on Kabul airport in an attempt to prevent Taliban jet fighters using the runway.
- 13 The ICRC evacuated foreign aid workers from Northern Afghanistan following a fresh out break of fighting in the area. The withdrawal came one day after Taliban made advances in the northeastern province of Faryab Province.
- 16 Two Afghan sisters, eight and sixteen, were kidnapped from Hayatabad.
- 17 Four heavy rockets fired by anti-Taliban forces slammed into Kabul airport, no casualties were reported.

AUGUST

- 14 At least 13 people were killed and many injured when Taliban jets launched massive air raids on Bamyan Province. Bamyan airport had been the main target of the Taliban bombings.
- 17 The Quetta-based Hazara Students Federation (HSF) and Tanzim Nasl-i Nau Hazara Mughal (INNHM) condemned Taliban actions against different communities in Afghanistan and blamed Pakistan for backing the Taliban despite the fact that the Taliban massacred three hundred innocent persons after capturing Mazar. They added that hundreds of women have been raped during the house-to-house searches in areas under their control.
- 18 Amnesty International cited unconfirmed reports of mass arrests of members of non-Pashtoon ethnic groups in the north and reported mass killings in Mazar-i-Sharif, and urged the Taliban to allow independent monitors access to the area.
- 21 Three unidentified Australian aid workers were reportedly missing in Kandahar after US attacks on Afghanistan.
- 21 The UN compound at Jalalabad was stormed by Afghans. UN sources reported that about 4-5,000 persons attacked UN offices in Jalalabad. No loss of life was reported although loss of property did occur.
- 21 Some 27 people were killed and 30 sustained severe injuries as a result of US missiles attacks on Afghanistan. Most of the killed and injured persons were Afghans but some victims were identified as Saudi and Pakistani nationals.

SEPTEMBER

- 04 A barrage of 15 rockets landed in residential areas near the Kabul city main airport killing two people and injuring three.
- 05 A large explosion at a military depot in Kabul last week left 60 soldiers dead, a UN weekly report said.
- 06 Iranian police had killed four drug traffickers, allegedly linked to Afghanistan's Islamic Taliban militia.
- 08 Eight members of Jamiat-e-Islami Balochistan of Pakistan were killed in Afghanistan civil war. The dead bodies were returned and were buried in their respective areas.
- 13 Fifteen Western converts to Islam were killed in the US missile attacks on suspected terrorist camps in Afghanistan. They were from Britain, France, Germany and the US, an Islamic group, claiming close ties with Saudi dissident Osama bin Ladin, claimed.
- 16 Taliban claimed to have discovered three mass graves containing bodies of 900 militia soldiers, near Mazar-i-Sharif.
- 16 More than 21 Sindhi (Pakistani) Taliban have been killed in the Afghanistan war. They hailed from different Madrasas (religious schools) operating in different districts of Sindh Pakistan.
- 19 Taliban heavily bombed Siakhak district in Wardak Province, leaving more than 100 persons dead and several others wounded.
- 20 Around 200 people were killed and hundreds wounded when opposition launched rocket attacks on a crowded market to the west of Kabul.
- 21 Forces loyal to Ahmad Shah Masoud rocketed Kabul for the second consecutive day killing 10 and injuring the same number.

OCTOBER

- 01 One rocket struck Kabul airport - no casualties were reported.
- 04 Iranian authorities arrested four Afghan nationals, accusing them of spying for the Taliban in Afghanistan.
- 06 More Pakistani mercenaries arrived, through Kunar and Nangarhar, in preparation for a major offensive against arch-rival Ahmad Shah Masoud.
- 06 Taliban executed three of their soldiers for sexual offences and extortion committed after the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif was captured in August. The three were hanged in public because they abused the name of the Taliban.

- 08 Iranian authorities arrested five Afghan nationals, accusing them of spying for the Taliban and seeking to carry out terrorist activities in Iran.
- 10 Taliban publicly executed a man accused of multiple murders in the southern Province of Zabul after its supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar approved the sentence.
- 12 Ten Pakistanis and two Afghan were arrested while trying to cross the border illegally, to Afghanistan, at Torkham; arms and ammunition were recovered from their possession.
- 14 Two people were killed and at least five more wounded when three rockets landed in a village on the outskirts of Kabul.
- 17 Taliban arrested 400 people for attempting a coup d' etat against the Islamic government in the border town of Jalalabad as well as in Kabul.
- 17 Five eminent opposition commanders joined the Taliban forces in Samangan Province. According to the report they expressed their loyalty and full support to Taliban.
- 18 Three people were killed during a rocket attack on Kabul airport.
- 19 Between 30 and 40 people, aligned with former Afghan Defence Minister Shah Nawaz Tanai, were arrested in Kabul, Nangarhar, Khost, Paktia, Kunar and Herat and were put behind bars.
- 23 Ahmad Shah Masoud freed 50 Taliban Prisoners through the mediation of a Saudi Arabian-based Afghan trader, Syed Jalal.
- 23 Twenty six people including women and children were killed in a landmine blast in Kandahar city in Afghanistan.
- 30 Iran gathered 30 thousand Afghans living in Iran and Central Asia, with a view to help opponent factions to depose the Taliban.
- 31 ICRC repatriated four bodies of Taliban prisoners, killed in an accident in the opposition held Northern Afghanistan.

NOVEMBER

- 01 Taliban interrogated two Pakistanis, allegedly involved in the killing of a UN official in Kabul in August, which led to the withdrawal of all UN aid workers from Afghanistan.
- 01 The opposition alliance accused Taliban of violating the cease-fire agreement at several fronts including Ghorband area north of Kabul.
- 01 Iran gave illegal Afghan refugees 3 weeks to leave the country, Iran Interior Ministry official Hassan Ali Ebrahimi said. The Afghans must report to the Ministry by November 21 and get an exit permit in Mashhad in Khorasan Province, which borders Afghanistan. Returning refugees will each be given US\$40, a blanket and 50 kilos (120 pounds) of wheat for their journey home, as an incentive to return.

- 04 The Taliban freed 107 prisoners captured during fighting in northern Afghanistan.
- 04 Hundreds of new Afghan refugees arrived in Chitral NWFP; many of them had left northern Afghanistan due to harsh economic realities in the country. A report from Kunduz Province said that people of many areas were facing starvation and many of them would die if immediate relief was not made available.
- 10 Eight Taliban were among 10 people killed in violence in Indian occupied Kashmir.
- 13 Two men were publicly executed in Kabul. Both had pleaded guilty to separate murders before the local Supreme court and executed by a member of the victim's family.
- 13 Taliban in Kabul announced the discovery of 12 dead bodies in a building in Kabul, believed to have been executed by the Hezb-i-Wahdat.
- 24 The Taliban released 100 opposition prisoners from the Pule Charki jail in Kabul.
- 24 A former Afghan air force general, Shireen Agha, was murdered by unknown persons in Thal in Hangu district in NWFP.
- 28 More than 20 rockets shook Kabul and wounded at least five people. According to reports most rockets hit the combined military and civilian airport.

DECEMBER

- 01 Six Afghans, carrying opium, killed by Iranian security forces at Iran/Afghan border.
- 01 Three students were killed and five others wounded when Taliban police fired at a demonstration against the medical college administration in Jalalabad. The incident occurred when students started a demonstration to protest lack of facilities.
- 13 Over 60 were killed and 39 wounded when Masoud forces launched an offensive across three front lines in Kabul City.
- 21 More than 70 bodies were recovered from two mass graves in Ghazni and Zabul Provinces, southern Afghanistan.
- 22 Container full of ammunition exploded at Taliban military base in Kabul, no casualties.
- 28 A former Mujahideen, Commander Turan Juma Khan, was assassinated in Peshawar.
- 28 Taliban publicly executed an alleged murderer and chopped off the limbs of two other men accused of highway robbery in the western Herat region.
- 29 Maulavi Shahabuddin, a top Hezb-i-Islami leader, was killed in his house by unknown persons in Sangicharak area, Jowzjan Province.
- 29 Former Governor of Balkh Province and leader of Jamiat-i-Islami, Maulavi Mohammad Alam was shot dead along with his bodyguard in Nehr-i-Shahi district of Balkh Province.

OTHER NEWS

JANUARY

- 02 Taliban asked Burhanuddin Rabbani and the northern alliance for a representative meeting of the Afghan Ulema (scholars).
- 02 Hezb-i-Wahdat proclaimed that the Taliban had sent 3,000 troops to Kunduz Province in northern Afghanistan to avenge the reported murder of Taliban fighters.
- 04 Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), urged Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to restrict the movement of Afghan refugees to their camps and make arrangements for their early repatriation.
- 04 Taliban, for the third time, warned Iran to extradite Gen. Malik. If it refused, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan would create problems for Iran by supporting its opposition.
- 04 The Taliban declined the UN's request to stop bombing Bamyan airport and claimed that "opposition forces were using Bamyan airport for military purposes".
- 04 Construction of a massive gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan, costing US\$2.5 billion, would begin soon. Taliban were ready to sign the deal. Minister of Information and Culture, Amir Khan Muttaqi said, following his recent visit to the United States.
- 06 The Provincial Government in Peshawar, decided to allow Afghan refugees to construct their cabins once again along the Nasir Bagh canal. These had been destroyed by a huge fire on 11 December 1997.
- 06 Taliban decided to organize a permanent armed forces in a bid to ensure a centralized authority all over Afghanistan. The Taliban leaders called upon those former military officers, who had received training only from Islamic countries, to send their resume to Kabul through the various diplomatic missions for consideration.
- 08 Making charges of violations in opposition-run prisons, the Taliban asked international aid groups, including the United Nations, to investigate prison conditions in areas held by Hezb-i-Wahdat.
- 08 UNHCR reported that 1400 families had been registered and settled in Akora Khatak. These were new refugees from northern Afghanistan.
- 10 Taliban Government named Maulavi Abdul Hakim Mujahid as its new Ambassador to Pakistan. Mujahid, who represented the Taliban administration at the United Nations for about two years, would replace Maulavi Shahabuddin Dilawar, who would now act as Afghan Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.
- 09 The United States, called on Taliban and all warring factions to ensure the safety of aid workers inside Afghanistan.

- 10 Taliban urged foreign aid groups to pull down the sandbags from their homes and offices as it gave the wrong impression to the local people.
- 12 A man accused of murdering four people and attempting to assassinate a Taliban commander Mullah Naqibullah was publicly executed in Kandahar Province.
- 13 An Afghan transport aircraft crashed near the Pakistan-Afghan border, some 120 kilometers from Quetta, due to bad weather.
- 15 Among the 51 victims of the Afghan plane crash in the Taliban area near Chaman, three were Pakistani nationals, sources said.
- 16 Mullah Mohammad Omar, said that those religious scholars, holding degrees of Daraul Uloom (of international repute) would be invited to the meeting of Ulema. The meeting was proposed by Nawaz Sharif to discuss the problems in Afghanistan.
- 16 Karl Inderfurth, US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, said "The US will not formally recognize the Taliban unless a broad-based government is formed and women and their rights are respected."
- 19 Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, said they would not allow the United States to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan nor would they accede to any outside pressure regarding the present state of Afghan women, under the Kabul administration. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is well aware of the rights of Afghan women and they have been given all the due rights under Islamic laws."
- 22 Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Ahmad Kamal said "there is a window of opportunity to bring peace to Afghanistan". Kamal said the Taliban were ready to share power with their military rivals, if certain conditions were met.
- 27 The opposition freed 35 Taliban prisoners of war held in Mazar-i-Sharif and handed them over to the ICRC.
- 27 Taliban set free 112 prisoners from Pul-i-Charkhi prison in honour of Eid-ul-Fitr.

FEBRUARY

- 04 Taliban police arrested more than 80 people at Kabul central money changing market who refused to sell US dollars at a new fixed rate.
- 04 A devastating earthquake in a remote and freezing Rustaq District in Northern Afghanistan Takhar Province left about 4,400 dead and thousands injured.
- 05 A spokesman of the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, Peshawar clarified that new pass books to Afghan refugees had been issued for identification purpose.
- 07 Mullah Mohammad Omar Akhund ordered Taliban fighters to stop battle against their opponents for three days as a mark of sympathy with the quake-hit people in Takhar Province.

- 07 For the second time, two more major aftershocks late left more victims in northern Afghanistan Takhar Province. According to International aid workers at least 250 more people were killed and 50 injured.
- 09 ICRC officials reported that thousands of people were moving out in panic from remote villages in Takhar Province to Kabul and elsewhere in the wake of aftershocks from an earthquake.
- 10 For the third time a new earthquake shook northern Afghanistan, at least eleven more people were killed and eight injured.
- 13 Opposition forces captured Qala-e-Zal, a key town in northern Kunduz Province, after heavy fighting with the Taliban militia. At least 11 Taliban fighters were killed and 60 prisoners taken.
- 13 Dostum was injured by a Taliban militia mortar. He was in Uzbekistan for treatment. Dostum's spokesman, Sibghatullah Zaki, described the report "as completely baseless".
- 15 Taliban Commander Mullah Abdul Razaq accepted the responsibility for taking out former-Afghan president Dr. Najibullah from the United Nations compound in Kabul and ordering his execution.
- 15 Taliban authorities blackened the face of a soldier for accepting bribe and paraded him through the streets of Kabul to "teach a lesson" to other Taliban fighters.
- 17 Taliban authorities rejected a list of Ulema proposed by the opposition to initiate peace talks saying the list included people who are "not at all Ulema".
- 17 Pakistan Government Minister said that the Turkmenistan-Afghan-Pak pipeline should be completed by the year 2001.
- 19 The actual work on US\$4.5 billion transit Afghanistan Gas Pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan would start in March.
- 20 Taliban authorities in Kabul amputated the hand of an alleged thief in the presence of thousands of city residents. Hamidullah, was accused of stealing goods worth US\$313. He was surrounded by hundreds of Taliban guards and not allowed to speak to reporters before the sentence.
- 20 Former Afghan Defense Minister, Ahmad Shah Masoud, accused the Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar Akhund of backing out from the promise to form a joint commission of Ulema to bring peace in Afghanistan. He also claimed that the northern alliance headed by Prof. Rabbani would announce the new parallel Afghan Government in the near future with its temporary base in northern Afghanistan.
- 23 Eleven people of an Afghan family were wounded when a gas cylinder exploded in their house in Jehangira.

- 23 A seven year old Afghan girl missing from her home in the Rajjar Refugee Camp was found. It was understood that one of her kidneys had been stolen.
- 26 Torrential rain and floods in the southern Afghanistan city of Kandahar, Arghandab, Panjwai and Maiwand districts left 20 dead and 3,000 homeless.
- 27 A man sentenced to death for 'sodomy' survived an attempt to execute him by Taliban. The man was found alive under the rubble of a mud wall, which had been pushed on top of him and two others sentenced to death for the same offence.

MARCH

- 03 A 70 member Afghan delegation (Peace-Loving Afghan, Promoting the Cause of National Unity) left Quetta for Kandahar to persuade the Taliban leadership to participate in the Grand Afghan Jirga expected to be held in Frankfurt, Germany.
- 04 A Pakistani organization of human rights and wild life protection demanded the Government to repatriate Afghan refugees from the country through army operation.
- 05 A group of 527 Afghan refugees left Peshawar for their home village of Goraik in the Eastern Province of Nangarhar under the new group repatriation scheme of UNHCR.
- 09 The German Embassy in Islamabad refused to issue visas to an eight-member delegation of Afghans to attend a conference in Hamburg, Germany.
- 12 Thousands of Kabul residents turned out for a Public execution to watch the father and brother of a murdered man shoot dead the accused.

The UN in its 1997 Annual Report listed Afghanistan and Burma as the major opium grower countries. The report mentioned that opium poppy was grown largely in Taliban controlled areas.

- 09 International Women's Day (8 March) was designated to Afghan women this year to focus attention towards their miserable plight. To mark the International women's day prominent, Afghan, Iranian and Western women urged the United Nations and member Governments not to recognise any Government in Afghanistan as long as Afghan women were denied their rights.
- 09 European Commissioner, Emma Bonino, said that Taliban policy towards women was an assault on their rights. Talking to BBC, Ms. Bonino said, "what is happening in Kabul is an aggression and is a very dangerous one and we promise to do whatever we can."
- 17 Taliban replaced the solar calendar with the lunar calendar in Afghanistan.
- 18 Dr. Amanullah Rasul, a leader of Afghan Society for Peace, called upon Pakistan, Iran and other neighbouring countries to stop meddling in Afghanistan's internal Affairs and let Afghans decide their own fate.

- 19 A Boeing 727 aircraft coming from southern Kandahar crashed 30 kilometres outside Kabul killing all 45 people on board.
- 19 Taliban suspended two commanders following an armed clash with Pakistani militiaman at the Torkham border.
- 20 Ahmad Shah Masoud agreed to release 64 Taliban prisoners and hand them over to former Mujahideen commander Haji Abdul Qadir.
- 20 Abdul Hakim Mujahid took charge as new Afghan Ambassador to Islamabad to replace Mawlawi Shahabuddin Dilawar, who had been appointed Taliban Government's Ambassador in Saudi Arabia.
- 20 The Taliban Government introduced visa restrictions for International Muslim women working with agencies. These women would not be allowed to enter Afghanistan, unless accompanied by a close relative.
- 24 Taliban Health Minister, Mullah Mohammad Abbas, said that female doctors and nurses were recruited throughout Afghanistan to provide health services to Afghan women. Addressing a Press Conference, Mullah Abbas said that special wards had been arranged for women in the two big hospitals of Kabul, Rabia Balkhi and Malalai. He also added that WHO were to start a special course for 30 female professionals by April 15.
- 24 All 14 members of the UN international staff in Kandahar returned to Islamabad following a series of disputes with the Taliban Authorities. The UN also temporarily suspended all activities in the Kandahar region.
- 31 There were around 130,000 TB patients in Afghanistan. Some 70percent of all TB cases in Afghanistan are found in women of child-bearing age, 15 to 45, reported a survey conducted by WHO. Chronic malnutrition and lack of exposure to adequate natural light and air were the main causes for this situation. If the TB epidemic in Afghanistan was to be controlled, the WHO appealed to the international community to help provide necessary resources to build TB control facilities in Afghanistan to be successful.

APRIL

- 01 President of Afghan Students Organization, Jamal Shajan Afghan called upon NWFP Chief Minister Sardar Mchtab to order the release of 16 Afghan students who were detained by the University Town police during clashes with activists of IJT.
- 10 Taliban accused Iran of blocking the Helmand river on its side of border, causing the river to swell, over flow its banks and flood dozens of villages in south western Afghanistan. "Dozens of villages in Nimroz Province have been inundated with water, which was trapped on the Afghan side of the border" said Taliban ambassador to Pakistan. "We want the international community to do something", he added.
- 10 Osama bin Ladin made his first public appearance on 10 April in Afghanistan when he offered Eid prayers along with top Taliban leaders in Kandahar Province. This was the first public appearance of Ladin since his reported threats to US mission in Pakistan.

- 11 Mass graves, dating back to the early 1980s, were discovered in Kandahar in southwestern Afghanistan. Taliban officials announced in Kandahar that about 80 bodies had been recovered from the mass graves and digging continued. The mass graves were found in the foothills north of the city in the Miankoh area of Kandahar.
- 10 According to a report from Chakhari district in central Afghanistan, an impartial inquiry showed that an ancient Buddhist Stupa, some 12 Kilometers northeast of Kabul, was damaged by rain, snow and neglect.
- 12 Iranian President Mohammad Khatami in his meeting with the UN special envoy for Afghanistan declared his support for United Nations efforts to negotiate peace in Afghanistan. "As long as there is not a consensus among the countries of the region on opposition to a military solution, on support for inter-Afghan talks and a coalition government, any talk of a quick end to the conflict is optimistic" he added.
- 13 Flooding in Faryab Province killed 30 people and left thousands more homeless. A spokesman for the Anti-Taliban said 2,000 houses had been destroyed, 9,000 animals killed and over 5,000 people homeless.
- 19 Prof. Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, who returned to Peshawar after a five month stay abroad, announced his intention to resume his active role in resolving the Afghan dispute.
- 20 Seven Japanese girl scout leaders distributed 21,448 gift packs to Afghan refugee children in some schools in a refugee camp in Peshawar. Each peace pack contains exercise books, assortment of stationary items and other toys from the Japanese girls and boys who collected the packs. According to UNHCR 60,750 peace packs have been delivered by the Japanese since 1995 and are valued at more than US\$1.0 million.
- 21 Pakistan International Airlines adopted a new policy and started asking deposit of US\$ 3,000 from each Afghan using international flights of PIA, not only from Pakistan to abroad but also from various foreign countries to Pakistan.
- 23 Turkish border guards detained 66 Afghan refugees trying to enter the country from Iran.
- 23 Some 64 Afghan nationals were arrested at Taftan, a tiny town near Quetta, Pakistan bordering Iran and Afghanistan.
- 25 The ICRC announced its decision to move its regional headquarters from Afghanistan's northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, keeping in view security reasons.
- 27 At least 2,000 Afghan refugees left for their homeland under the auspices of UNHCR. Every family was given Rs.5,000, three sacks of wheat, a tarpaulin and some materials for house construction.
- 29 Heavy rains and floods killed 35 people in some parts of Afghanistan. The rains damaged more than 300 houses in Kunar Province, and caused major damage in Faryab and Nimroz Provinces.

MAY

- 04 Taliban authorities started a drive to confiscate an estimated 2 MT of opium from farmers in three Provinces of Afghanistan. The opium was to be destroyed publicly in Jalalabad on June 1. Taliban were conducting house-to-house searches in parts of Nangarhar, Logar and Laghman Provinces to recover the contraband from farmers who had already collected opium from the poppy pods. The information was given by the Governor of Nangarhar, Maulavi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with the UNDCP delegation headed by Giovanni Quaglia.
- 04 According to a survey by the Frontier Post more than 1,300 Afghan children, below the age of 18, had adopted garbage collecting as a profession to support their families living as refugees in Pakistan.
- 14 Some 65 Afghan families returned home to Tizin village, close to Sarobi district of Kabul Province.
- 14 It was reported that Taliban enforced Islamic hair-styles on 65 people. Armed anti-vice teams occasionally come out on the streets with scissors to improve hair-styles.
- 20 A group of 200 Afghan Refugees consisting of men, women and children returned to Afghanistan from Karachi.
- 22 Amnesty International strongly criticized the human rights record of the Taliban saying that in most of the cases decided by the Shariat courts, evidence is incomplete and the accused were not provided sufficient opportunity to prove their innocence.
- 26 Taliban administration decided to cancel all the passports issued by the Rabbani administration.
- 27 Repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland was likely to suffer a serious set back due to shortage of funding to UNHCR. According to an official, UNHCR had appealed for funds warning that the organisation may not be able to continue working for the refugees, if contributions remain scarce.
- 30 For the second time in this year a devastating earthquake ripped through northern Afghanistan Rustaq, Chah Ab district in Takhar and Shahr-e-Buzurg and Faizabad districts in Badakhshan Provinces and killed more than 5,000 people. The earthquake, measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale, devastated 60 villages and left 6,000 people homeless. The United Nations and ICRC have launched a major rescue operation to pull out people trapped under the rubble.

JUNE

- 01 The Taliban burned some 1,893 kg of opium in Jalalabad under supervision of UNDCP. According to Taliban, the opium had been collected from Kama district of Jalalabad and Laghman Provinces on the assurance from the UNDCP that it would provide necessary civic facilities to the poppy cultivating areas.

- 06 Taliban Civil Aviation Minister signed a deal with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to improve the communications system in Afghanistan's war ravaged airports. Under an US\$8.0 million deal, IATA would install satellite communication equipment at the Taliban held Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad and Herat airports; Ariana Afghan Airlines President Mawlawi Mohammad Yunus said.
- 03 The massive earthquake relief operation in northwest Afghanistan was put in danger by torrential rain as fears grew for thousands left without food or medical help for five days. The airstrip at the main relief base center in Faizabad was submerged under water after being hit by a flash flood, forcing UN aid flights to abort their missions. According to a report UN has made an urgent appeal for more helicopters and fuel.
- 07 A desperate need for clean water became the focus of relief efforts in the earthquake devastated area of north Afghanistan where spring, wells and pipes had been destroyed turning villages into breeding grounds for disease. According to a UN specialist, fears of an outbreak of a bacterial disease called shigella. This was diagnosed in the Chah-Ab district in Takhar - which is life threatening if not treated.
- 10 Based on report, on 10 June, children's rights to survival, protection, development and participation are all affected by the ceaseless armed conflict in Afghanistan. "The impact of conflict on children in Afghanistan", the report states, "adds to the frustration prevailing among girls at their exclusion from education and the recent restrictions imposed by the Taliban have further worsened the situation."
- 16 The Taliban religious army shut down more than 100 privately-run schools that were quietly educating thousands of girls in defiance of the Taliban ban on education for girls. The Taliban Religious Affairs Minister Haji Qalamuddin announced the closure at a news conference in the beleaguered capital and warned that anyone who defied the ban would be punished.
- 18 At least 174 Afghan families left Quetta for Kandahar, under the rehabilitation programme of the UNHCR.
- 18 A series of strong tremors were felt in Kabul early, sending people to rush outdoors for protection. The city was shaken three times, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damages.
- 24 Uzbekistan launched a plea for EU help to cut off drug trade originating from its neighbor Afghanistan and trafficked through former Soviet republics to western Europe.
- 25 The Taliban announced to all doctors and medical personal not to examine and treat women without their legal Mahram present.
- 29 The Afghan Campaign for Ban on Landmines (ACBL), called on Taliban and Northern Alliance to immediately halt use of landmines in their fighting in Afghanistan as a sign of respect to the Islamic principles.

JULY

- 01 Iran accused the Taliban of helping drug smugglers who bring their merchandise into the country. The Taliban "arms and equips the smugglers" in Afghanistan, General Jabla Ansari, assistant Commander in Charge of the Iranian police, told Iranian television.
- 01 Teams of Taliban fighters took to the streets of Kabul making sure the residents knew how to say their prayers. Taliban fighters armed with rubber hoses and leather straps sealed off a major road intersection checking the accuracy of Quranic recitation as well as making routine inspections of beards that all men are required to sport. The afternoon blockade forced hundreds of cars, cyclists and pedestrians to make a four kilometer detour around Kabul's pot-holed back streets to avoid the religious inspections.
- 04 Two alleged murderers were publicly executed in Ghazni under orders of the Taliban.
- 05 Twenty shopkeepers caught selling their wares and not offering prayers during official prayer time were beaten and had their shops closed for five days; Taliban radio said.
- 05 Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar said that they would not allow functioning of political parties in Afghanistan. He added "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan continues to work under Islamic Shariat and would not allow such freedom, which may harm Islam and patriotism".
- 05 The Taliban announced issuance of visa policies and declared that they would not allow foreigners to its controlled areas without possessing visa of its diplomats and other representatives.
- 07 Maulavi Mohammad Mohsin, a prominent scholar of Madrasa Salfia kidnapped one month back, was released by kidnappers. He said that Taliban officials had allegedly established personal jails in Quetta and demanded of the Pakistan Government to take immediate action against those who were creating a law and order situation in Balochistan.
- 08 The Taliban issued a strict ban on the attempted conversion of Afghan Muslims to any other religions, announced by radio Shariat.
- 11 Pakistan banned export of food items on credit to Afghanistan and Central Asian states. Exports of food items through land route to Afghanistan and through that country to Central Asia would be allowed only against advance payment or letters of credit in foreign currencies.
- 12 Muttahida Islahi, Committee of NWFP, demanded the Government for an immediate expulsion of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. A meeting of the Committee asked Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to order an army operation for the repatriation of refugees to their country. The Afghans had no reason to remain in Pakistan as there was a peaceful Taliban-led Government in most parts of Afghanistan.
- 18 The Taliban declared the deletion of all secular terms from the Constitution and applicable laws to bring their administration fully in line with Islamic law.

- 20 The Human Rights and Wild Life Protection Organization termed the Afghan refugees as the main cause of increasing trend of dacoities and other crimes in the society. They demanded the Government to immediately expel them from the country. The meeting was chaired by Mohammad Jan Delsooz.
- 20 Two local UN employees abducted from the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad were found dead. Mohammad Basharyar, 55 and Habibi, 49 - employees of WFP and UNHCR were kidnapped by unknown Afghans outside Jalalabad University on July 13. The body of Basharyar was found on 18 July in a river in Behsud district while Habibi's body was recovered on 19 July in Laripur district east of Jalalabad.
- 21 Taliban exchanged prisoners of war. The exchange, facilitated by the Red Cross, took place on 21 July, and involved the exchange of 140 prisoners. The prisoners on both sides were wounded and sick, they were transported in a convoy of Red Cross vehicles.
- 22 Taliban set guidelines governing permitted length of facial hair and beard trimming. "It is brought to the notice of the Muslim countrymen not to trim their beards shorter than a fist's length because trimming beards is a great sin in Islam", radio Shariat announced.
- 25 Pakistani Taliban in Orakzai agency destroyed audio-cassettes being sold in Ghaljo Bazaar and declared music and other such pursuits un-Islamic. Led by Mufti Din Asghar, they said they were striving to introduce Shariat not only in Orakzai agency but also in Pakistan and the Islamic world. He praised the Taliban Government in Kabul and credited it with introducing Islamic laws and improving law and order in Afghanistan.
- 26 The Taliban confiscated two Land Rovers donated by the Princess Diana memorial fund to a charity providing artificial limbs to Afghan mine victims.
- 26 Former Interior Minister, Naseerullah Babar supported the Taliban decision not to succumb to the pressure by NGOs working in Kabul and said they were justified in taking decisions to uphold Afghanistan's sovereignty.
- 27 The UN and ICRC completed their emergency operation in response to the May 30 earthquake in northern Afghanistan.
- 29 A Taliban representative rebuffed the UN's attempts to mediate a dispute between the Taliban and international aid groups, saying the issue was no business of the UN's.
- 30 Mullah Mohammad Omar announced a general amnesty for all opposition commanders who gave up fighting and handed over government property to the Taliban.
- 30 A civilian airplane of the Taliban administration crashed in Kunduz Province and killed all 5 passengers.
- 31 The Taliban launched a series of raids on electronics shops in Kabul, smashing and taking away dozens of television sets and video players. Taliban Deputy Vice and Virtuc Minister Maulavi Qalamuddin said "we had told these people to turf out this stuff within 15 days". He added that the operation had so far resulted in the netting of over 100 sets from shops alone, and that the next phase of house-to-house searches had not yet begun.

AUGUST

- 06 Taliban amputated one hand and one foot from each of three men convicted of robbery as thousands of spectators looked on in a sports stadium in the southern city of Kandahar.
- 09 Taliban officials claimed to have captured 35 Iranian trailers and their Iranian drivers in Mazar-i-Sharif. Efforts were made to shift them to the Taliban headquarters in Kandahar.
- 09 ICRC evacuated 50 war-wounded Taliban fighters from the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.
- 10 Iran urged the UN to take urgent action to secure the release of 10 of its diplomats and a journalist kidnapped by the Taliban in Mazar-i-Sharif.
- 12 Nine Iranian nationals including a diplomat were evacuated from Bamyan to Islamabad by the UN and left for Tehran.
- 12 The Afghan National Liberation Front (ANLF) headed by former President Prof. Sibghatullah Mujaddidi called on the Taliban to ensure the safety of foreign missions and diplomats.
- 14 The Taliban publicly executed a murderer and amputated limbs of two robbers amid shouts of "God is Great" at a Kabul stadium.
- 16 About 1,500 people, mostly Uzbeks and Hazaras, were stopped from crossing the border at Torkham.
- 16 A Pakistani khateeb (scholar) at a mosque in Islamabad explained that only a force like the Taliban could end the corruption and inefficiency that had crippled the country, and asked Taliban to take over Pakistan, as they had proved that they were fighting for Islam.
- 16 Two Arabs trying to cross over to Afghanistan, without legal documents, were arrested at Torkham by Pakistani police.
- 18 US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, indicated that if the Taliban wished to be recognised they must hand over Saudi extremist Osama bin Ladin.
- 18 Tajikistan provided four helicopters to Ahmad Shah Masoud. The helicopters were flown by Afghan pilots, from Kulyab, Tajikistan to Panjsher valley.
- 18 Taliban indicated willingness to swap thirty five Iranian drivers for Gen. Abdul Malik.
- 19 The Shiite population in Afghanistan urged the international community to send a team to Mazar-i-Sharif to see for themselves the crimes committed by the Taliban. They added that the Taliban had been killing local people and committing atrocities in Mazar city.
- 20 Mullah Hassan Akhund, the Taliban Foreign Minister, vowed that Osama bin Ladin would never be handed over to US authorities.

- 20 Mullah Omar said in an interview "We will never hand Osama bin Ladin over to anyone, and shall protect him with our blood at all costs."
- 20 The US launched a series of Cruise missile attacks on Khost and Jalalabad cities in Afghanistan, claiming the attacked areas were terrorist bases.
- 22 An Italian UN official injured by unidentified assailants died in Kabul. A Frenchman, reported to have been wounded in the shooting, was hospitalised.
- 22 Hundreds of Taliban staged a protest demonstration at the Pak-Afghan border against the US for launching missiles attacks on Afghanistan and vowed to stand up against US anti-Islamic schemes.
- 23 Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan strongly condemned the rocket-attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan.
- 24 Three Pakistanis injured in the US strikes on southern Khost were shifted to Peshawar for treatment.
- 24 Afghan refugees staged a demonstration in Peshawar to protest against the US missile attack on Afghanistan.
- 27 Taliban said that there was no evidence against Osama bin Ladin regarding his involvement in the bombings at the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and "we do not have diplomatic ties with the US and Afghanistan does not have an extradition treaty with any country of the world. If evidence was made available to us, we could consider trying Osama in a court of law in Afghanistan."
- 27 The NWFP Government closed down four Afghan universities on the grounds that they operated without proper authorization. According to the report Pakistani police accompanied by a magistrate barged into the university without any prior notice and evicted students by force and broke tables.
- 27 Taliban claimed capture of a large cache of Russian-made short-range missiles in an isolated northern valley.
- 30 Poppy cultivation showed a rising trend in Afghanistan as compared to previous years and it needed sustainable international action against illicit drug production, said the UNDCP study in 1998.
- 30 India claimed 60 percent of Kashmir fighters are Afghans and Pakistanis.

SEPTEMBER

- 01 Taliban stepped up efforts to recruit fighters to join their forces planning assaults on the last opposition strongholds in Parwan, Kapisa, Badakhshan and Bamyan Provinces. According to a report from Khost Province, announcements were being made in mosques seeking volunteers for the Taliban army; and young men from different parts of Khost, were being encouraged to join the Taliban.

- 01 The US missile attack caused a serious set back to the gas transmission project from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan: a spokesman of UNOCAL said.
- 01 Following the closure of Afghan universities and colleges, the Afghan Commissionerate issued directive to close down private clinics and investigation outfits run by Afghan doctors.
- 01 An official of the Provincial Government of Pakistan said that Pakistan has decided to repatriate all Afghan refugees saying that Taliban in Afghanistan was stable enough to cope with the rehabilitation of displaced people.
- 02 Taliban soldiers found the wreckage of an unexploded American cruise missile on a mountain top in the southern province of Kandahar, a senior Taliban claimed.
- 03 10,000 Afghans refugees were being repatriated back to their homeland every month with the help of NGOs and UNHCR, said a Pakistani official.
- 07 Former interior Minister of Pakistan Naseerullah Babar admitted that under his guidance the Taliban were trained in 1994 in Pakistan.
- 11 The Afghan Commissionerate in NWFP asked thousands of Afghan refugee families living in Nasir Bagh camp Peshawar to evacuate the camp, failing which their houses would be bulldozed.
- 14 Taliban gave assurances that the ethnic residents of the opposition stronghold Bamyan and its ancient Buddhist relics would be protected after the Islamic militia captured the city.
- 15 Refugees fleeing Mazar-i-Sharif to Pakistan told officials of UN High Commissioner for Refugees about "indiscriminate killing" by Taliban troops, particularly of members of the Hazara ethnic minority: a UN official said.
- 16 Two Iranian diplomats, who escaped the Taliban deadly raid on Iran's consulate in northern Afghanistan last month, returned to Iran.
- 17 Taliban army accused Iran of killing 56 Afghan refugees living in Iran and urged the international community to censure Iran.
- 17 Afghan refugees living in Mashad, Isfahan and Tehran in Iran have been harassed and some have died in attacks following the murder of Iranian diplomats by the Taliban in Afghanistan.
- 19 The UNHCR urged Iran to ensure the safety and security of Afghan refugees, based in Iran, reported BBC.
- 19 According to the UN assessment more than one million people of Bamyan area, captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan, were facing the threat of starvation and famine; and one lakh and sixty thousand people are likely to die of starvation.

- 19 Five Iranian prisoners released by the Taliban as a result of Pakistani mediation arrived in Islamabad from Kandahar, Afghanistan.
- 23 Taliban claimed to have arrested around 1,000 rival troops in Wardak Province over the past three weeks.
- 23 Pakistani Police at Nasir Bagh refugee camp recovered a radioactive element (Uranium) from two Afghans.
- 25 Taliban authorities in Afghanistan arrested 55 persons, including 25 former army officers, for allegedly conspiring to topple the government in Kabul

OCTOBER

- 03 A joint campaign by Taliban authorities, UNICEF and the WHO thwarted the outbreak of a cholera epidemic this summer. A spokesman for WHO said that about 10 people died from suspected cholera related diseases during recent months, a reduction from last year's figures. The suspected cases were better controlled than in previous years.
- 03 A Protest demonstration was staged by a large number of Afghan families outside the Nasir Bagh Refugee Camp on the outskirts of Peshawar to press the Pakistan government not to displace them from the camp. The demonstration was arranged by Nasir Bagh Islahi Shura and it was urged upon the Government of Pakistan that, until the restoration of peace and normalcy to Afghanistan, the Nasir Bagh camp refugees should not be displaced.
- 05 Opium production in Afghanistan grew 16 percent to more than 3,200 MT. In the year, a United Nations drugs control programme study said. The study also showed an estimated 63,674 hectares (157,274 acres) of poppies, from which opium is derived, were cultivated during the 1997-1998 season.
- 22 Under a rigid new social code, imposed by the Taliban, the nearly 50 Hindu families living in a southern Afghan city are required to wear a distinctive yellow piece of cloth.
- 23 The United Nations and Taliban signed an agreement making the Taliban responsible for the security of UN personnel in Afghanistan.
- 23 OMAR launched a campaign, in Jalalabad, to create awareness on the dangers of landmines.
- 26 An earth-quake shook the town of Rustaq in Afghanistan's north-eastern Province of Takhar, there were no reports of damage or casualties.
- 31 The newly appointed United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan, Erick de Mul, who replaced Alfredo Witschi-Cestari arrived in Islamabad to assume his office.
- 31 Three Taliban officials were publicly flogged for accepting bribes and committing forgery. Mawlawi Sherajan, chief of the Islamic militia's Intelligence Department was awarded 37 lashes for taking 30 million Afghans US\$845 from a local resident.

NOVEMBER

- 01 Mullah Mohammad Omar declared that any Taliban driver involved in a fatal road accident will face five years in jail, state-run radio reported.
- 01 An August massacre of civilians by Taliban troops in Mazar-i-Sharif was one of the worst atrocities of Afghanistan's long civil war, Human Rights Watch said in a new report. According to eyewitnesses, Taliban systematically executed 2,000 civilians largely because of their ethnic and religious identity.
- 03 Ancient Afghan Buddha treasures were damaged during fighting between the Taliban and Hezb-i-Wahdat forces in Bamyan Province. According to eyewitnesses the Buddha's statue was hit in the face and the groin.
- 05 The World Food Programme WFP sent the Taliban a protest over the seizure of food and trucks in Bamyan Province. A WFP statement said 1,500 metric tonnes of food aid including six trucks had disappeared from the WFP warehouses in Bamyan and Yakolang; and its office had been occupied by Taliban.
- 06 UN report alleged 5-8,000 people, many of them minorities, women and children, were killed after Taliban captured Mazar-i-Sharif; detailing mass killings of civilians including executions, torture and mass suffocation of people crammed into metal containers.
- 13 Six hundred and fifty Afghan refugee families returned to Afghanistan because they were not feeling economically and physically secure in Iran.
- 20 Taliban administration declared beards and turbans mandatory for students of Kabul University and ordered that clean shaven students and those not wearing turbans would have to face physical and monetary punishments.
- 22 A delegation of the National Commission of Human Rights of Afghanistan (NCHRA) met Mr. de Kerckhove, High Commissioner of Canada in Pakistan, and discussed with him issues pertaining to human rights in Afghanistan.
- 28 Erick de Mul, the new United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan, met for the first time with Mullah Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil and other representatives of the Taliban administration at the Afghan Embassy, Islamabad.
- 28 A killer was made to pay qisas and two thieves had their hands amputated at the National Sports Stadium of Kabul.

DECEMBER

- 06 Taliban released 118 prisoners in honour of the holy month of Ramadan.
- 10 Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) staged a sit-in in front of the UN offices lamenting the human rights record in Afghanistan. The Association condemned both Taliban and different Jihadi groups for their alleged violation of basic human rights in Afghanistan, on the eve of 50th Universal Declaration of Human Rights.