

THE AFGHAN JOURNAL

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A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME AND TRANSFORMATION

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NATIONAL WELCOMING WEEK

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ARCHITECT OF AFGHANISTAN'S LEGACY AND MODERNITY





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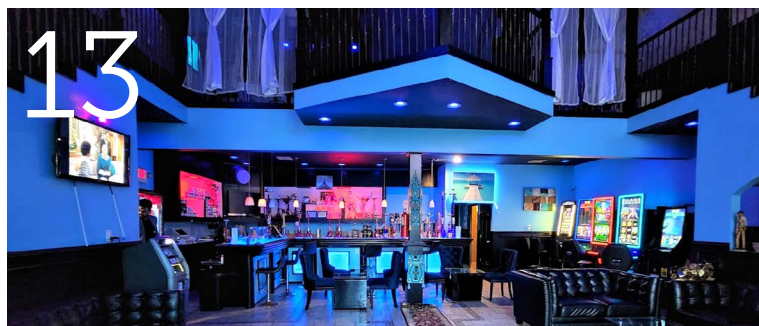
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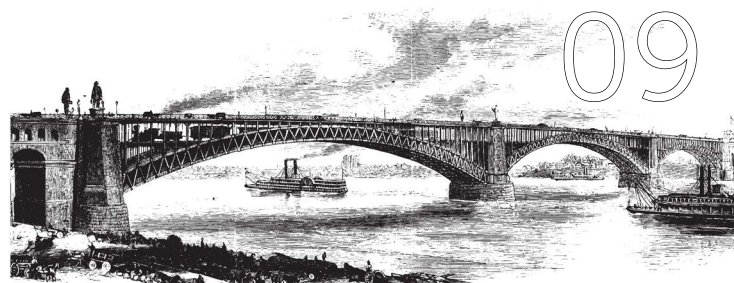
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**CAPTURING COUNTLESS TALES
IN A SINGLE SNAPSHOT**



AFGHAN COMMUNITY CENTER

The Afghan Community Center is a vibrant and inclusive space in Saint Louis that serves as a hub for the Afghan community and fosters connections with the broader community.

The Afghan Community Center seeks to develop a center that reflects the diverse needs, aspirations, and cultural heritage of the Afghan community in the United States. The ultimate goal is to create a welcoming environment that promotes social integration, empowerment, and mutual understanding.

The Afghan Community Center aspires to create a dynamic and inclusive space that celebrates Afghan culture, fosters social cohesion, and empowers individuals and families to thrive within the St. Louis community.

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NATIONAL WELCOMING WEEK



[Welcoming America](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that leads a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by ensuring everyone belongs. All people, including immigrants, are valued contributors and vital to the success of our communities and shared future. Through the Welcoming Network, communities develop the roadmap they need to create welcoming policies and share new approaches to inclusion to create an environment where everyone can thrive.

Welcoming Week is an annual campaign that celebrates the work in communities to become welcoming places for all, including immigrants. Launched in 2012 by Welcoming America and its members, Welcoming Week provides individuals and organizations the opportunity to showcase their values through events and initiatives that foster connections and collaboration between immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as belonging for all.

This year's Welcoming Week is September 8-17, 2023. Through Welcoming Week, the [International Institute of St. Louis](#) and other community members and groups bring together neighbors of all backgrounds to build strong connections and affirm the importance of welcoming and inclusive places in achieving collective prosperity. Additional events, toolkits and ability to register your own events can

be found on the website: <https://welcomingamerica.org/initiatives/welcoming-week>.

September 13 – [Inaugural Multicultural Center Mixer](#)

September 14 – [International Institute Community Development Corporation](#) (IICDC) Event, a free and open event for all looking to learn about the IICDC services

September 17 – Arabic Tea Party

More details and information will be shared across the International Institute's social media platforms. Stay tuned for more announcements for Welcoming Week!



THE AFGHAN SUPPORT PROGRAM'S JOURNEY TO CULTIVATE HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY IN ST. LOUIS

As the sun rises on August 17th, 2023, a new chapter of hope and opportunity begins for the Afghan diaspora in America. [Moji Sidiqi](#), the Afghan Community Development Program Manager, and [Hamdullah Hamdard](#), the Afghan Support Communications Manager, kickstart a monumental journey that spans across some of the most vibrant Afghan-populated cities in the United States. Their mission: to attract new Afghans and secondary migrants, offering them a chance at a brighter future in the welcoming embrace of St. Louis. "We don't want our new family members or new neighbors to continue to survive, we want them to thrive," said Moji Sidiqi.

A Trail of Promise Across America: From the shores of San Francisco to the streets of Brooklyn, the ASP Country Tour promises to captivate hearts, minds, and dreams. The tour weaves its way through the Afghan diaspora's most cherished cities - San Antonio, Houston, Seattle, Chicago, Nashville, Knoxville, Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia, Richmond, Denver, Los Angeles, and Queens - all leading to a single destination of boundless opportunity: St. Louis.

St. Louis: Where Dreams Take Flight: Why St. Louis, you ask? This city stands as a testament to the ASP's unwavering commitment to fostering a community of Afghan success. With a meticulously designed framework, the program offers a comprehensive support system to ensure a smooth transition and a thriving life for newcomers. The ASP provides: [Afghan Community Center](#): A hub of cultural exchange, support, and togetherness.

[United States Afghan Chamber of Commerce](#): A platform to drive economic growth and innovation.

[Afghan Entrepreneurship \\$15,000 Grants](#): Fueling the entrepreneurial spirit within Afghans, providing the means to shape their own destinies.

[Coding Scholarships](#): Empowering the tech-savvy generation with \$15,000 scholarships, unlocking the world of coding and innovation.

[Housing Fund](#): Making homeownership a reality and providing stability for families.

[Soccer Program for Youths and Children](#): Nurturing the passion for sports and building a strong community.

Beyond Boundaries: A World of Opportunities, but the excitement didn't stop there. St. Louis, often heralded as the gateway to opportunity, boasts

a dynamic job market that caters to every skill set. Whether you're an experienced professional or a newcomer to the workforce, St. Louis holds doors to countless career paths, all while embracing diversity and innovation.

Affordability and Quality of Life: In St. Louis, affordability doesn't mean compromising quality. Comfortable housing options, accessible healthcare, and an array of amenities beckon newcomers to invest in their dreams without the strain of a hefty cost of living. The prospect of homeownership gleams even brighter here, offering a chance for families to establish roots and build a future.

Entrepreneurial Oasis: Have you ever envisioned yourself as a business owner? St. Louis turns dreams into reality with its entrepreneurial ecosystem. [The Afghan Entrepreneurship \\$15,000 Grants](#), combined with the backing of the United States Afghan Chamber of Commerce, provides the fertile ground needed to nurture innovative ideas into flourishing enterprises.

Unity in Diversity: St. Louis prides itself on its vibrant tapestry of cultures. A true melting pot, it bridges connections among diverse backgrounds while fostering an environment of shared traditions and new experiences. In St. Louis, you'll find belonging.

Education: The Beacon of Growth: With prestigious educational institutions dotting the cityscape, St. Louis is a hub for personal and professional growth. Pursue higher education or acquire new skills; the city opens doors to a multitude of opportunities.

A Beacon of Hope for Newcomers: The Mayor's Office for New Americans, a unique initiative in St. Louis, shines as a symbol of unwavering support for those seeking a fresh start. A groundbreaking example that other cities can only aspire to emulate.

Building Afghanistan in St. Louis: Our vision encompasses more than just relocation. It aspires to transform St. Louis into a home. The ASP Country Tour is not just a journey across cities; it's a journey of the heart, the soul, and the pursuit of a new beginning. As the tour unfolds its chapters from August to late November 2023, it carries with it the promise of dreams realized and futures rewritten.





THE REVIVAL AND RESONANCE OF AFGHAN CARPETS

[Afghan carpets](#) have woven themselves into the rich tapestry of the country's history, reflecting its cultural heritage and artistic prowess. Dating back to the 16th century, these carpets emerged as both decorative pieces and functional assets, providing warmth during the harsh winter months. However, it was during the reign of [King Amanullah Khan](#) in the early 20th century that Afghan rug making reached its zenith. The king's patronage led to the creation of intricate and beautiful carpets, many of which endure in museums and private collections, testaments to Afghanistan's artistic brilliance.

Yet, the tumultuous events of the late 20th century cast a shadow over this vibrant tradition. The Soviet invasion in 1979 forced many master rug makers into exile, imperiling the legacy of Afghan carpets. Despite these challenges, the Afghan rug industry is experiencing a renaissance. [UNESCO's](#) recognition of Afghan rug making as a "Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" in 2003 played a pivotal role in revitalizing this art form, rekindling global interest and driving a resurgence in production.

The allure of Afghan carpets rests not only in their aesthetic but also in their construction. Crafted primarily from dyed wool, these carpets embrace a centuries-old tradition of using natural dyes sourced from plants, minerals, and insects. Beyond their eco-friendliness, these dyes infuse the carpets with a vivid palette, creating a harmonious interplay of colors that range from the vivid to the muted. This unique color palette is a hallmark of Afghan rugs, often influenced by the geographical origin of the rug. The Afghan rug's design language speaks through its patterns, often characterized by geometric shapes and tribal motifs. The significance of these motifs is profound, portraying the story of the weaver's community and heritage. The single medallion motif, a classic Afghan design, features prominently with a large centerpiece surrounded by smaller motifs. Another style showcases multiple symmetrical medallions, while all-over patterns

and intricate border designs contribute to the rich visual narrative. These motifs are a testament to the cultural diversity that finds its expression in each woven thread.

The quality of an Afghan rug is measured by its [knots per square inch](#), a testament to the skill of its maker. A higher knot count correlates with finer craftsmanship, durability, and a distinctive dense texture. While the average Afghan rug boasts between 50 and 200 knots per square inch, some exceptional pieces reach up to 1000 knots. This weaving technique not only confers strength but also contributes to the rug's unique tactile appeal.

Afghan carpets are more than just art; they are functional adornments that enhance living spaces. Integrating these rugs into interior design involves selecting the right size, color, and pattern to harmonize with the existing décor. The size should suit the room's dimensions, avoiding an overpowering or underwhelming presence. Careful consideration of color harmonies ensures the rug blends seamlessly into its environment. Similarly, the choice between intricate or simpler patterns hinges on the desired ambiance.

As Afghan rugs find their place in contemporary homes, their role extends beyond aesthetics. They offer protection to floors and walls alike, acting as both art pieces and functional coverings. Embracing an Afghan rug is an embrace of a cultural heritage that survived adversity and is now thriving anew, evoking the elegance of a tradition steeped in history.

In the face of challenges, Afghan carpets have not merely endured; they have flourished. Their threads weave together art, heritage, and home decor, bridging time and culture through masterful craftsmanship. As we adorn our living spaces with these exquisite creations, we partake in a tradition that symbolizes resilience, artistry, and the enduring spirit of Afghanistan.

ARCHITECT OF AFGHANISTAN'S LEGACY AND MODERNITY

[Ahmad Shah Durrani](#), also known as Ahmad Shah Abdali, holds a prominent place in history as the founder of the [Durrani Empire](#) and the modern nation of Afghanistan. In the month of July in 1747, during a loya jirga held in Kandahar, Ahmad Shah was elevated to the throne of the Afghans, thus establishing his capital in the same city. The bedrock of his ascendancy rested largely on the support of the [Pashtun tribes](#), a pivotal alliance that propelled him to embark on a series of strategic endeavors.

Ahmad Shah's ambitions extended in multiple directions. He steered his forces eastwards towards the expansive territories of the [Mughal](#) and [Maratha Empires](#) in India, westwards towards the crumbling [Afsharid Empire](#) of Iran, and northwards towards the Khanate of Bukhara in Turkestan. In a remarkably short span of time, he successfully extended his dominion from Khorasan in the west to North India in the east, and from the Amu Darya river in the north to the Arabian Sea in the south.

Upon ascending the throne, Ahmad Shah assumed the title of Shāh Durr-i-Durrān, signifying "King, Pearl of Pearls," and renamed his Abdali tribe as "Durrani" to commemorate his reign. His influence was so profound that even after his passing, he was fondly referred to as Ahmad Shāh Bābā, or "Ahmad Shah the Father," by Afghans.

Ahmad Shah's early life was marked by his lineage as the son of Mohammad Zaman Khan, the Governor of Herat and chief of the Pashtun Abdali tribe, and [Zarghona Anaa](#), daughter of [Khalu Khan Alakozai](#) from the Alakozai tribe. Born in either Herat or Multan, Ahmad Shah's early years were defined by the political turmoil following his father's death, leading to his imprisonment along with his brother Zulfikar by the Afsharid forces of Persia.

However, Ahmad Shah's fortunes took a turn when he caught the attention of [Nader Shah Afshar](#), who integrated him and his brother into his administration. Following Nader Shah's death, Ahmad Shah emerged as a powerful leader, eventually ascending to become the sovereign ruler of Afghanistan. His achievements were marked by his military prowess and political acumen, which allowed him to conquer regions like Punjab, Kashmir, and parts of India.

One of Ahmad Shah's most notable accomplishments was his victory in the [Third Battle of Panipat](#) against the Marathas in 1761. This triumph in-



fluenced the trajectory of the subcontinent and had implications for the East India Company's policies in the region. His refusal to advance deeper into India prevented a potential clash with the Company and indirectly allowed their expansion in Bengal.

Despite his military successes, Ahmad Shah's health deteriorated due to the toll of his campaigns. He passed away in 1772 from an ailment that afflicted him for years. His legacy lived on through his successors, though the unity he had maintained gradually dissolved, and Afghanistan fragmented into smaller entities. His profound impact on history is commemorated by his tomb in Kandahar, a place of pilgrimage, and his legacy as the founder of the modern Afghan state.

Ahmad Shah Durrani's reign left an indelible mark on the history of Afghanistan, shaping the course of the nation's future and influencing regional dynamics for generations to come.

BUZKASHI - AFGHANISTAN'S RESILIENT NATIONAL SPORTING PASSION

In the heart of Afghanistan, where the rugged terrain meets a resilient spirit, a sport that embodies the nation's essence reigns supreme – [Buzkashi](#), a name that echoes with history, horsemanship, and an unwavering passion.

Translated as “goat grabbing” from Persian, Buzkashi's name succinctly encapsulates its primal nature. Rooted in the [nomadic Turkic tribes](#)' traditions during their westward migrations between the 10th and 15th centuries, this awe-inspiring game traces its origins to the raw struggle for survival and dominance in a harsh landscape.

Once a contest of primal significance involving actual thefts of goats and cattle between nomadic tribes, Buzkashi has transformed into a mesmerizing spectacle of horseback tenacity. Thriving across the vast expanse of Central Asia, it's Central Afghanistan where this sport has ascended to the status of a national treasure, captivating the hearts of Afghans across the country.

As the sun rises over the Afghan landscape, the stage is set for [Buzkashi](#). The atmosphere is electric, charged with anticipation as the decapitated and gutted goat or calf carcass, soaked for 24 hours to ensure its resilience, takes center stage. This carcass, sometimes enhanced with sand for weight, awaits the signal that will unleash a torrent of horsemen in a breathtaking display of skill and determination.

The sight of galloping horsemen, dust rising as their horses surge forward, is a testament to the enduring spirit of Afghanistan. With a fierce determination that reflects the nation's history, the riders vie to seize the carcass and maintain control, showcasing not only their physical prowess but also their unyielding resolve.

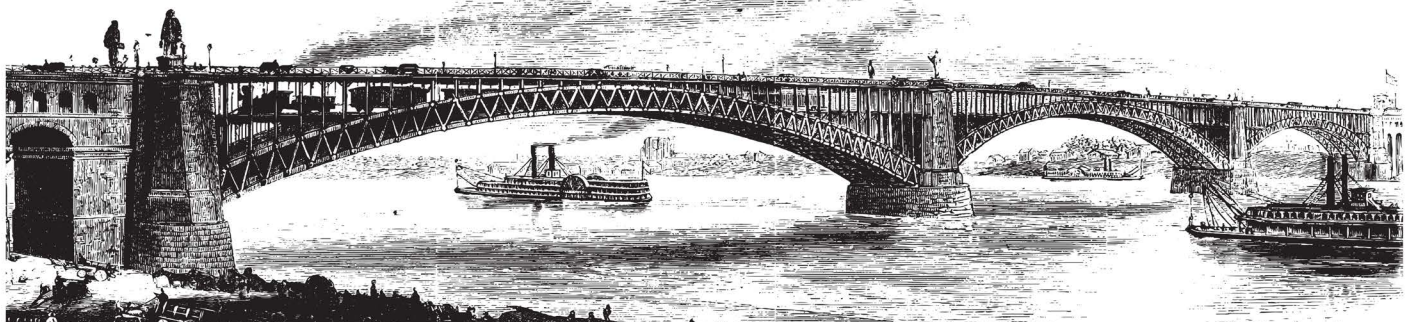
In Afghanistan, Buzkashi is not merely a sport; it's a passion that transcends generations. Fridays, already significant in the Islamic world, become even more vibrant with the resounding echoes of Buzkashi matches. Crowds gather in the thousands, drawn by the magnetic pull of the game that has been woven into Afghanistan's cultural fabric.

[Qarajai](#), a particular style of Buzkashi, sees players score points by carrying the carcass around a flag or marker before triumphantly hurling it into the Circle of Justice, a scoring circle at the opposite end of the field. Guided by the Afghan Olympic Federation, each match consists of halves lasting 45 minutes, where two teams of ten riders each demonstrate their equestrian prowess and strategic acumen. Buzkashi's allure lies not only in its physicality but also in the time-honored journey of its participants. Known as Chapandazes, these players are not considered mature until their forties, a testament to the years of practice, observation, and dedication required to master the art. Equally dedicated are the horses, undergoing rigorous training to become the stalwart companions of these riders. It's a partnership that speaks of mutual respect and a deep connection with Afghanistan's heritage.

Beyond the regulated tournaments, Buzkashi's unbridled spirit manifests in the rural heartlands, where villages engage in Tudabarai – an informal, chaotic version of the game. Boundaries are dictated by the landscape, and the rules are minimal: maintain possession, don't secure the carcass to the saddle, and avoid striking opponents' hands. Anything else goes, from fierce punches to exhilarating horseback chases that might lead players into rivers. In these rugged showdowns, the essence of Afghanistan's determination shines brightly.

For those fortunate enough to venture into the remote valleys of the [Wakhan Corridor](#), the sight of a Buzkashi match against the backdrop of the majestic Pamir mountains is an unforgettable experience. This convergence of tradition, terrain, and passion captures the very soul of Afghanistan, a nation that continues to embrace its heritage with unyielding pride.

Buzkashi isn't just a game; it's a saga of Afghanistan's past, present, and future, an embodiment of its strength, resilience, and unwavering spirit. As dust rises and hooves thunder across the field, the nation's heart beats to the rhythm of the horsemen, celebrating a sport that's more than just a game – it's an enduring symbol of Afghanistan's identity.



A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME AND TRANSFORMATION

Embark on a fascinating journey through the history of St. Louis, a city often referred to as the “[Gateway to the West](#).” Over the course of three centuries, St. Louis has evolved from a remote frontier outpost into a bustling center for trade and the processing of abundant agricultural resources that extended westward from the mighty [Mississippi River](#).

A Bold Beginning

Let’s transport ourselves back to 1763, a time when [Pierre Laclède](#) had a vision. He set sail up the Mississippi River from New Orleans, driven by the idea of establishing a modest trading post. Picture this: he landed at the confluence of the Mississippi and [Missouri Rivers](#), where he laid the foundation for what would later become the city of St. Louis.

Embracing Change

Fast forward to 1803, and an important event unfolded. [President Thomas Jefferson](#) acquired the Louisiana Territory from France, bringing St. Louis into the fold of the United States. As years passed, St. Louis became a crucial stopping point for those embarking on journeys westward. The convergence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers bestowed upon St. Louis a unique significance, as it became a hub for trade facilitated by these two vital waterways.

The Great Plains Connection

Imagine the vast fields of the Great Plains to the west, producing abundant crops like golden waves of wheat. This agricultural bounty fueled a flourishing trade industry in the 19th century. St. Louis’s strategic location and the navigable rivers made it a prime center for trade, securing its place as a central point for agricultural commerce.

The Era of Innovation and Growth

Around 1817, a steamboat named [Zabulon M. Pike](#) made a historic voyage up the Mississippi River, stopping in St. Louis. This marked the beginning of the steamship era, which significantly boosted trade and brought an influx of people to the city. As steamships traversed the river, St. Louis’s trade

and population experienced remarkable growth. In the 1840s, waves of immigrants, including Germans, Italians, and Irish, arrived on American shores, many of them finding their first landing in St. Louis. The city’s population surged as these newcomers contributed to its cultural diversity and economic expansion. Despite a devastating fire in 1849, which prompted widespread rebuilding, St. Louis emerged stronger, with a commitment to resilience and progress.

Enduring Challenges and Embracing Progress

During the [Civil War](#), St. Louis remained steadfastly loyal to the Union. Although the conflict impacted trade, the city’s spirit endured, buoyed by its resilience. In the aftermath of the World Wars and urbanization trends, which saw people moving to the suburbs, St. Louis faced challenges. However, the city’s determination to persevere led to a resurgence, marked by new industries and innovative ideas.

Cultivating Excellence: From Brews to Pet Food

A unique aspect of St. Louis’s history was its prominence in the beer and pet food industries. In the late 1800s, Eberhard Anheuser’s acquisition of a struggling brewery laid the foundation for the iconic Budweiser beer brand, while [William H. Danforth](#)’s venture into pet food demonstrated the city’s knack for innovation.

A Legacy of Celebrations

In 1904, St. Louis took center stage by hosting both the World’s Fair and the [Olympics](#), showcasing its role as a global player. This marked a pivotal moment in the city’s history, solidifying its reputation as a place of progress, celebration, and innovation.

Looking Forward

Throughout its history, St. Louis has stood as a testament to exploration and adaptation. It has embraced change, weathered challenges, and celebrated accomplishments. Just as the iconic Gateway Arch symbolizes the city’s adventurous spirit, St. Louis continues to be a welcoming gateway to new beginnings, exploration, and growth.

THE ZANBURAK SHAH WALL AND KABUL'S ENDURING LEGACY



The [Zanburak Shah Wall](#), an architectural marvel in the heart of Kabul, holds profound significance, echoing the vibrant history of the city and encapsulating a heritage that spans an astonishing 1400 years.

Long before the ascendancy of Islam, the Zanburak Shah Wall materialized as a result of the ambitions of two ruling siblings who etched their indelible legacy onto the Kabul landscape. These sovereigns, Zanburak Shah and Zانبيليك Shah, intentionally chose this location to erect the ancient monument, giving rise to a structure that has defied the passage of time.

[Kabul](#), a city steeped in history, has its chronicles inscribed in the stones and clays of its ancient monuments, an animated narrative that continues to reverberate in the present day. The Zanburak Shah Wall serves as an unwavering guardian of the city's odyssey through history, reflecting the sagas of bygone eras and the cultural undercurrents that have molded its identity.

This monumental edifice is not merely a testament to [architectural](#) prowess; it also encapsulates the echoes of rivalry and strife that once graced Kabul's historical stage. In a time when conflicts were often arbitrated through feats of strength and arms, two monarchs found themselves in a face-off, selecting the very ground upon which the wall stands as their arena of contest. The annals recount the clash of swords and the intricacies of strategies that once defined this hallowed ground.

The meticulous construction process of the wall, involving painstakingly crafted baked clay, speaks volumes about the commitment to perfection held by its builders. The wall's or-

igins harken back to the [pre-Islamic era](#), and its endurance through the ebb and flow of centuries can be attributed to the steadfastness of the earth from which it was fashioned.

Beyond its historical lineage, the Zanburak Shah Wall remains a beacon of significance within the modern mosaic of Kabul. It is more than a tangible artifact from the past; it stands as a symbol of resilience and continuity in a city that has navigated transitions, upheavals, and metamorphoses. As Kabul grapples with the intricacies of the contemporary world, the wall serves as a steadfast reminder of the endurance inherent in its people and the fortitude that history bestows.

Perched atop the heights of [Sher Darwaza mountain](#), the colossal Zanburak Shah Wall casts an imposing silhouette over Kabul, offering a vantage point from which to contemplate the journey spanning ancient epochs to the present day. Past administrations have acknowledged the value of this historical gem and have undertaken painstaking restoration endeavors to safeguard its grandeur, ensuring that it endures as a testament to Kabul's history for generations yet to come.

Drawing a parallel, the Zanburak Shah Wall's resilience and historical importance find a semblance in the [Great Wall of China](#). Both walls transcend their origins, becoming not only physical structures but also symbols of human endeavor, endurance, and the indomitable spirit that perseveres through the ages. Just as the Great Wall stands as a guardian of China's history, the Zanburak Shah Wall safeguards Kabul's narrative, inviting reflection and connection across the expanse of time.

A NATURAL REMEDY FOR VARIOUS AILMENTS



[Basil](#), also known as "Rehan" in Arabic, is a fragrant herb with numerous medicinal properties. It is often used in culinary dishes for its aromatic flavor, but its benefits go beyond taste alone. Basil has been associated with various health benefits and has been used in traditional medicine for centuries.

Religious and Cultural Significance: Basil holds a special place in Islamic tradition. It is [mentioned in the Quran](#) as a blessed plant, and Allah's name is invoked during its cultivation. Additionally, references to basil can be found in Prophetic traditions (Hadiths). Therefore, basil is considered not only a beneficial herb but also a spiritually significant plant.

Medicinal Uses of Basil:

Brain and Nervous System: Basil is believed to have a positive impact on the brain and nervous system. Consuming basil leaves can help improve memory and cognitive functions.

Skin Health: Basil has antibacterial properties and can promote healthy skin. Using basil-infused water or oil can help alleviate skin conditions, reduce body odor, and keep the skin fresh.

Digestive Health: Drinking basil water infused with soaked basil seeds can aid digestion and promote gastrointestinal health.

Wound Healing: Applying crushed basil leaves to wounds can help accelerate the healing

process and prevent infections.

Fever Reduction: Basil leaves can be boiled and consumed to help reduce fever symptoms, especially when combined with other natural remedies.

Respiratory Health: Inhaling steam from boiled basil leaves can provide relief from respiratory issues and congestion. It can also help clear the airways.

Immune System Support: Basil leaves contain essential nutrients that can boost the immune system, helping the body fight off infections.

Anti-Inflammatory Properties: Basil has anti-inflammatory properties that can help alleviate pain and discomfort caused by inflammation.

Stress Relief: Basil leaves, when consumed in tea or infusion, are believed to have calming effects and can help reduce stress and anxiety.

Cardiovascular Health: Basil leaves are known to contain compounds that support heart health by helping regulate blood pressure and improving circulation.

Conclusion:

Basil, known as "Rehan" in Arabic, is a versatile herb with a rich history of use in traditional medicine and culinary practices. Its diverse range of medicinal properties, from skin health to stress relief, makes it a valuable natural remedy. Incorporating basil into your daily routine can contribute to overall well-being. However, it's important to remember that while basil has potential health benefits, it should not replace professional medical advice or treatments.



Fawzia Shahab
Afghanistan National Radio TV
Former Anchor

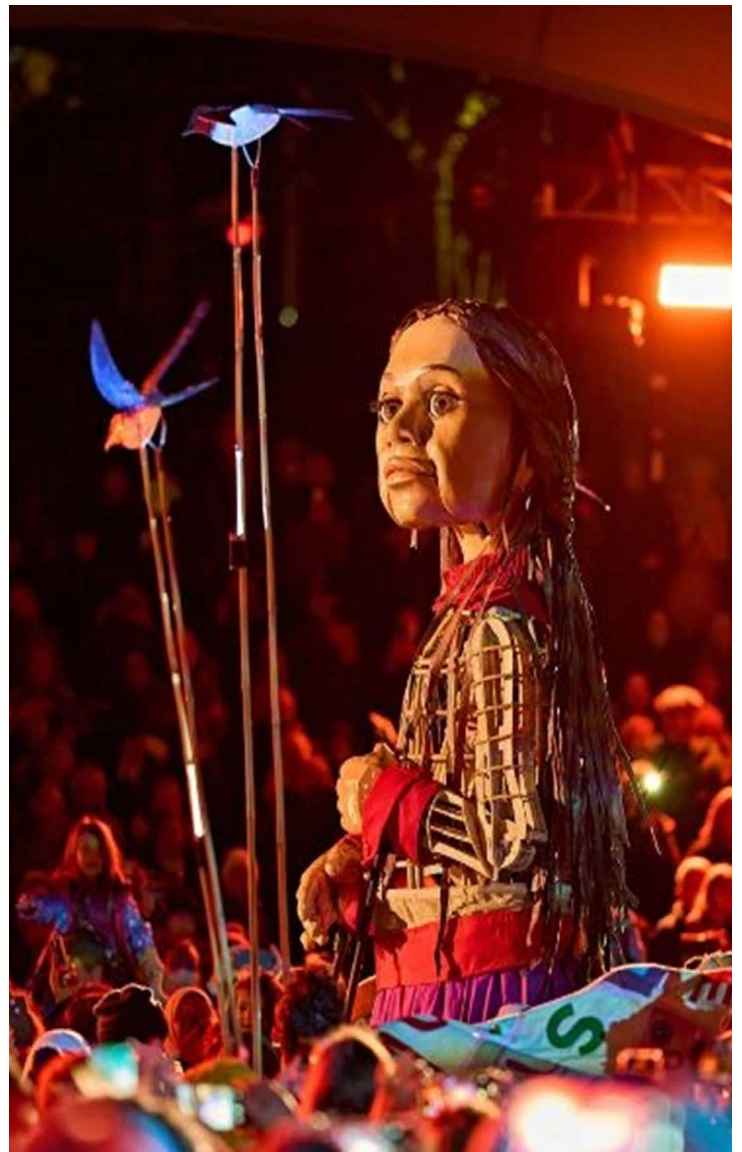


LITTLE AMAL

[Little Amal](#), the internationally celebrated 12-foot-tall puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee girl who has been welcomed by more than 250 uniquely created artistic events across the globe since she set out on her initial 5,000-mile trek across Europe in 2021, will embark on an epic 6,000-mile journey across the United States beginning in September with a stop in St. Louis on October 1 at the Arch Grounds.

October's event is being organized by the Little Amal national creative team, Dr. Phillip Woodmore, a St. Louis native, and a local committee including the International Institute, the St. Louis Mosaic Project, COCA – Center of Creative Arts, and local artistic and philanthropic leaders who are excited to welcome this national symbol of hope and humanity to our vibrant community. More details on the October 1st event will be released in the coming weeks.

Amal is inspired by a character in Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson's play *The Jungle*, about a refugee camp in Calais, France. *The Walk 2021* was a co-production with Good Chance Theatre. *Amal Walks Across America* is produced by The Walk Productions in association with Handspring Puppet Company.



From Dreamer to Entrepreneur Extraordinaire



Meet Akbar Rashidi, a dynamic Afghan entrepreneur, and the force behind two thriving local businesses: "The Blue Moon" Hookah Lounge and a top-notch Auto Service Shop. His journey from dreams to reality is nothing short of inspirational.

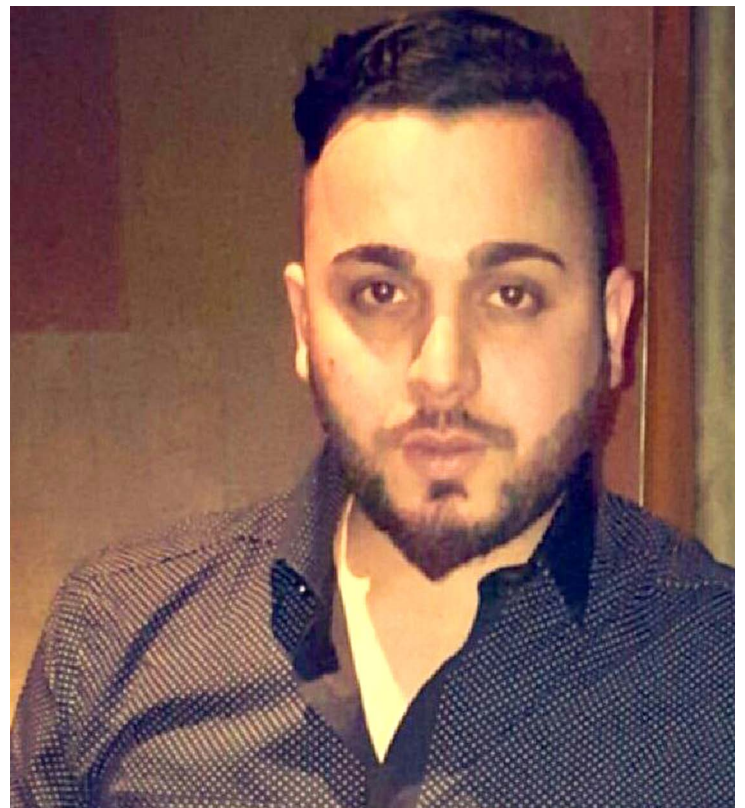
Akbar's entrepreneurial journey began with a simple dream - to be his own boss and create something remarkable that would benefit his community. What sets Akbar apart is his unwavering focus on innovation, exceptional quality, and unparalleled customer service. He continually raises the bar for excellence.

He is deeply rooted in the local community, actively engaging in events, sponsoring initiatives, and nurturing local talent to bolster the local economy. At his businesses he values integrity, respect, and transparency.

Countless success stories testify to the positive impact of Akbar's businesses on people's lives, from helping individuals achieve their goals to providing unmatched service.

Whether at "The Blue Moon" Hookah Lounge or the Auto Service Shop, diverse offerings cater to various needs, setting them apart from the competition. Akbar greet his new customers with open arms, often enjoying special promotions and discounts that make them feel valued from day one.

For Akbar, the greatest joy is making a positive impact on people's lives, serving their needs, and witnessing their satisfaction. He invites you to experience excellence at "The Blue Moon" Hookah Lounge and discover top-tier service at his Auto Service Shop. Be part of a journey filled with innovation, quality, and community spirit. Discover the difference today!



AFGHAN COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANT COMPETITION ROUND 3

EMPOWERING AFGHAN ENTREPRENEURS

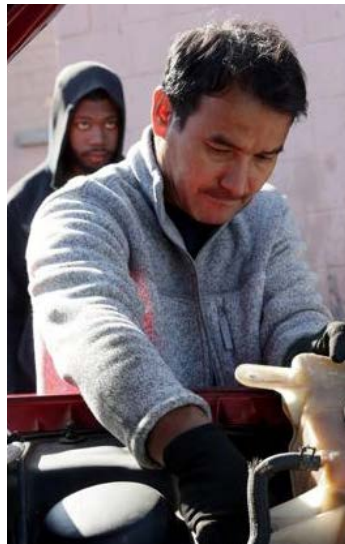
In a world that constantly challenges us with uncertainties and adversities, it is often the resilient spirit of entrepreneurs that paves the way for progress and prosperity. The Afghan Support Program, a beacon of hope and assistance, is now offering grants to Afghan refugees and immigrants who dream of establishing or expanding their businesses in the United States. This program aims to not only empower individual entrepreneurs but also to foster community development by creating employment opportunities for new refugees and immigrants in the Saint Louis City or County.

UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL: APPLY NOW!

The Afghan Support Program invites eligible candidates to unlock their entrepreneurial potential by applying for the \$15,000 grant. This grant aims to provide much-needed financial support to new arrivals who aspire to develop businesses and contribute to their communities. Whether you have a groundbreaking startup idea or seek to expand your existing venture, this program is ready to bolster your dreams and ambitions.

If you fit the eligibility criteria and have a business dream that deserves to be realized, waste no time in applying. The deadline for application submission is **September 30th, 2023**. Females, in particular, are highly encouraged to apply, as the program seeks to promote gender equality and inclusivity in entrepreneurship.

TWO SHINING EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS



The Afghan Support Program has already witnessed success stories from its past beneficiaries, inspiring hope and determination within the community. Two notable winners, Hamdullah Hamdard and Mohammad Reza Hassani, have demonstrated the true potential of these grants. Hamdullah Hamdard, the visionary founder of Owlson Pictures, has used the grant to make his mark in the world of video production, captivating audiences with unique storytelling and artistic prowess. On the other hand, Mohammad Reza Hassani, the enterprising owner of auto car repairs, has transformed his passion for automobiles into a thriving business, providing top-notch services to the local community.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

1. Be an Afghan refugee, immigrant, asylee, green card holder, or parolee.
2. Have moved to the US after August 2021.
3. Intend to either start a new business or expand an existing one.
4. The business must be located in Saint Louis City or County.

REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Business license, Business entity registration, and Employer Identification Number (EIN).
2. A comprehensive business plan, including detailed financial statements.
3. An overview of the overall business budget.
4. A comprehensive breakdown of how the grant funds will be utilized to drive business growth and success.

APPLY NOW




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Afghan Journal is thrilled to announce that our newspaper is now open to submissions from talented local authors. Share your captivating stories with us and let your voice be heard. Send us your articles today!

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