



TV

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## AFGHANISTAN: AN UNLIKELY PLACE FOR TOURISM

### VIDEO

SCENERY

### AUDIO

#### NARRATION:

War-torn Afghanistan is an unlikely tourist destination ... but there is hope that its World Heritage sites and the first national park of Band-e-Amir can attract tourists and help the local economy. (15)

GOV. SORABI ON CAMERA

HABIBA SORABI: (Dari) F

*"... the natural beauty and serene scenery of Bamyan that has the potential of attracting tourism to the area."* (6)

DONKEY ON STREET

#### NARRATION:

Dr. Habiba Sorabi is the first and only female governor in Afghanistan. She has been the driving force behind reviving tourism in Bamyan since her appointment four years ago. (11.5)

GOV. SORABI ON CAMERA

HABIBA SORABI: (Dari) F

*"We talk about eco-tourism so the people that are living in these areas can benefit. For example, in different villages or valleys,*

*there can be small guesthouses that are run by the community.” (10.5)*

NARRATION:

SNOW CAPPED PEAKS /  
MOUNTAINS

What makes this place unique is the enormous Buddhist monastery with thousands of caves carved into the mountain centuries ago. It was once known for the world’s tallest standing Buddha statues, symbolizing the importance and prosperity of the ancient route connecting East and West, the famous Silk Road. (22)

BUDDHA HILLSIDE CARVED  
STATUES

COUNTRYSIDE ROAD

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE – TALIBAN /  
BUDDHA DESTRUCTION

But in 2001... tragedy struck. The Taliban, the fundamentalist Islamist group – determined to destroy everything non-Muslim, in particular all material images of idols – blew up the 1500-year-old statues. (15)

GOV. SORABI ON CAMERA

HABIBA SORABI: (Dari) **F**

*“I can say that the presence of Buddhas is our history. It is our cultural heritage. It is an integral part of cultural history of the people of Bamyān.” (9)*

UNESCO STAFF IN CAVES

NARRATION:

The remains of the statues were declared a World Heritage Site in 2003. UNESCO, together with the Afghan government, is trying to conserve the Buddha niches with their cave art while paving the way for tourism, says Brendan Cassar, UNESCO’s

archaeologist in Kabul. (18.5)

BRENDAN CASSAR ON CAMERA

BRENDAN CASSAR: (English) **M**  
*“Development for the people, jobs, employment, diversification of the economy from potential industries like tourism...”*  
(6.5)

DIRT ROADS

NARRATION:  
For the adventurous, there are other things to see but it takes about three hours to drive the rugged, poorly maintained dirt roads to the spectacular Band-e-Amir lakes. (18.5)

BAND-E-AMIR SCENERY,  
WATERFALLS, DAMS

A cluster of six deep blue lakes, tucked into the Hindu Kush mountains makes up the first national park of Afghanistan. (8)

GOV. SORABI ON CAM

HABIBA SORABI: (Dari) **F**  
*“To expand tourism, certain amenities are necessary to make it possible for the visitors. One of them is transportation.”* (7)

DIRT ROADS

NARRATION:  
Better roads will bring more tourists. Once here, they can enjoy the local food, swan-shaped paddle-boats and hiking trails. (10)

PADDLE-BOATS / HIKING

FENCE / ISMAIL BY CAVES /  
LOCKING DOOR

Sayed Ismail earns a modest living working as a guard at the Giant Buddhas site. For a small fee, he takes tourists on a guided tour of the Buddha niches. (12)

ISMAEL'S FAMILY AT THEIR HOME / CAVE	Because of his job as a guard, the government has allowed Mr. Ismail and his family to live in two adjoining caves about 50 metres from the Small Buddha niche. (9.5)
BUDDHA STATUES	But there has been a lot of discussion worldwide about the future of the site and whether or not the two Buddha statues should be reconstructed. (9)
BRENDAN CASSAR ON CAMERA	<u>BRENDAN CASSAR:</u> (English) <b>M</b> <i>"As far as UNESCO's project is concerned, we're much more concerned about emergency conservation and intervention in the site. And this in itself provides options for the Afghan authorities in the future."</i> (10)
STATUE FRAGMENTS / ARTIFACTS	<u>NARRATION:</u> The fragments of the statues as well as the artifacts found during the de-mining are temporarily stored near the Buddha niches. Some day, they will be on display in a museum nearby. This will create more jobs for the locals, some of whom are already being trained as tourist guides. (20)
ISMAIL BY CAVES	
UN LOGO	This report was prepared by Saša Gorišek for the United Nations.