2.3 Afghanistan Road Network

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Ministry of Public Works (MPW) and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) are responsible for development, management and maintenance of Afghanistan roads

- National Highways - 3,363 km.
- Regional Highways - 4,884 km.
- Provincial Roads - 9,656 km.
- Non-paved roads are:
  - Rural Roads - 17,000 km.

As a result of decades of conflict, the road network was largely destroyed. Since 2002, Afghanistan has launched major programmes for improving its road network with the help of various international partners.

The Government is implementing the National Emergency Rural Access Project (NERAP) and National Rural Access Programme (NRAP) provide the construction and rehabilitation of rural roads.

Highway 1 or A01, formally called the Ring Road, is a 2,200 kilometre two-lane road network circulating inside Afghanistan connecting the following major cities (clockwise): Mazar, Kabul, Ghazni, Kandahar, Farah and Herat. It has extensions that also connect Jalalabad, Lashkar Gah, Delaram, Islam Qala and several other cities. It is part of AH1, the longest route of the Asian Highway Network.

Part of Highway 1 has been refurbished since late 2003, particularly the Kabul-Kandahar, with funds provided by the USA, KSA and others. Most work on that stretch was done by Turkish, Indian and local companies. Japanese companies were also involved near the southern Afghan province of Kandahar. In the west, Iran participated in the two-lane road construction between Islam Qala and the western Afghan city of Herat. Pakistan rebuilt the Jalalabad – Kabul road.

For information on Afghanistan Road Network contact details and additional information, see the following links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highway_1_(Afghanistan)


Road Security
MINES: Vehicles face the potential danger of encountering land mines that may have been planted on or near roadways. Land mines, large quantities of unexploded ordnance and insurgents exist throughout the countryside and alongside roads, posing a danger to travellers.

CRIME AND KIDNAPPING: Robbery and kidnappings, are a potential hazard on highways outside main cities.

ROAD SAFETY: The transportation system in Afghanistan is marginal. Vehicles are poorly maintained, often overloaded, and traffic laws are not enforced. Vehicular traffic is chaotic and must contend with numerous pedestrians, bicyclists, and animals. Many urban streets have large potholes and are not well lit. Rural roads are not paved. With congested roads and abundant pedestrian traffic, vehicle accidents are a serious concern and can escalate into violent confrontations.

COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT AVAILABILITY: Commercial transporters sometimes decline to provide services to insecure areas.

Weighbridges and Axle Load Limits

The newly built highways are constructed according to the norm and standards of vehicles’ capacity. Their axial contain four wheel tires and each axial is computed as (12) tons. Those axial with their own weights containing two tires are evaluated and practiced as (6) tons which means each tire has the capacity of (3) tons.

Road Class and Surface Conditions

Generally road transport is the major means of transportation in Afghanistan. Roads are very important in a country like Afghanistan, which is landlocked and does not have adequate marine, air and rail transport. Majority of the roads in the Southern Region of Afghanistan were destroyed during the prolonged civil war. Some new roads were constructed and the old ones were reconstructed. Blockages caused by security are to be considered.

Afghanistan Road Network Regional Information

South Western Region

Kandahar province the road condition to all districts is generally good during the dry season

Uruzgan Province is the mountainous area characterized with steep and narrow roads that makes transportation very difficult in winter especially to districts like, Gezab, Khas-Uruzgan, Dehrawad, Chinarto, Char-Chino and Chora.

Nimroz province is a plain land, mostly dusty and sandy and the road from Dilaram to Zaranj city is asphalted. The roads to other FDPs in the province are not paved, but they are generally good in summer.

Hilmand Province Roads are mostly gravelled and compacted.

Zabul Province is a mountainous area and it is not easy for transportation except for Qalat (the capital city of Zabul) and Shar-i-safa district, which are located on the main Kandahar-Kabul high way.

Eastern Region

Most of eastern region roads are in the mountains. Road are not paved with some that are very narrow making transport very difficult.

Northern Region

The main roads in the region are narrow. There is only one main tarmac road connecting Kabul with Maimana through Mazar with junction to Hairaton (northern border).

Mazar City to Hairaton District-Uzbekistan Border (86 kms)

The road from Mazar to Hairaton is asphalt road. This road is passable to all kind of trucks with different tonnage capacity. This road is the main transit road to cargo from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan.

Mazar City to Shiberghan-Jawzjan province (136kms)

The road from Mazar to Shiberghan is asphalted road. This is the only road connecting Mazar to Faryab and Sar I Pul through Shiberghan. This road can be travelled by all kind of trucks. Through this road, several districts like Balkh, Charbolak, Aqcha,Faizabad and many more are connected to each other.

Shiberghan to Ankhoi/Aqina (110 kms)

The road from Shiberghan to Ankhoi is asphalted. This road can be travelled by any type of vehicle with some seasonal restrictions. The road from Ankhoi to Aqina (northern border) is usually muddy and bumpy.

Andkhoi to Maimana city-Faryab (81 kms)

Road is asphalted and passable by all types of vehicles throughout the year.

Mazar City to Samangan-Aybak District (135 kms)

The road to Samangan is passing the Khulm Valley and the condition of this road is good and passable throughout the year for all kind of trucks with different capacities. This road is the highway connecting the Northern region to Kabul.
Mazar City to Kabul (425 kms)
This is the asphalted highway connecting the Northern Region and the capital Kabul and central Afghanistan. The road is passable throughout the year when snowfall does not block the Salang tunnel.

North Eastern Region
There are varying road conditions in the Northeast region of Afghanistan. Some parts are in the mountains other are in valleys. Road are narrow, winding and steep, with altitudes between 1,000 and 4,500 meters above sea level. In Badakshan, there is only one road (main road) from Faizabad heading to the east and to the west. There are some secondary roads to the. All the roads are exposed to landslide, fog, mudslide, flood, rain, and snow and impassable to the vehicles with harsh weather conditions.

Majority of districts still unreachable for all types of vehicles. Pack animals have been the best means of reaching these areas. The main road network in Faizabad is based on the following corridors:

Faizabad City to Kishim district (110 kms)
From Faizabad to Kishim unpaved road with most of the sections in very poor conditions. During rainy days, the road is washed away, and is passable only during summer. The road is passable to 6x4 or 6x6 trucks with a maximum capacity of 16mt; average transit time of 1 day for loaded trucks. From the center of Kishim to its villages, the roads are passable to trucks with the capacity between 8mt to 10mt. The roads are exposed to flood, landslide, mudslide, fog, rain and snow.

Kishim district to Calafgan district (24 kms)
The road from Kishim to Calafgan is dirt road with most of the sections in very poor condition, the road is passable to 6x4 or 6x6 trucks with a maximum capacity of 16mt; average transit time of 1½ hrs for loaded truck. From the centre of Calafgan to its villages, the roads are passable to trucks with the capacity between 10mt to 12mt. The roads are at risk to flood, landslide, mudslide, fog, rain and snow.

Calafgan district to Taloqan district (36 kms)
The road from Calafgan to Taloqan is passable to trucks with a size of 16mt to 20mt. The average transit time is 2 hrs for loaded trucks. And from the center of Taloqan to its villages, the passable size of trucks is between 12mt to 14mt capacity. The road is exposed to flood, landslide, fog, rain and snow.

Taloqan district to Kunduz City (84 kms)
The road from Taloqan to Kunduz is tarmac and passable throughout the year, the road is passable for all sizes of trucks, average transit time of 2½ hrs for loaded truck. The road is exposed to flood, fog, rain and snow.

Kunduz city to Baghlan province (111 kms)
The road from Kunduz to Baghlan is primary tarmac and passable throughout the year. The road is passable for all sizes of trucks and the average transit time 3 hrs for loaded truck. The road is at risk of flood, fog, rain and snow.

Kunduz city to Shirkhan Bandar (to the border of Tajikistan) (64 kms)
The road from Kunduz to Shirkhan Bandar is primary tarmac and passable throughout the year, the road is passable for all sizes of trucks, average transit time of 2 hrs for loaded truck. The road is at risk of Flood, fog, rain, snow and sand storm.

Kunduz city to Kabul (316 kms)
The road from Kunduz to Kabul is primary tarmac and passable for all sizes of trucks with an average transit time of 1 day for loaded trucks, the road is at risk of landslide, mudslide, fog, rain and snow.

Faizabad City to Baharak district (42 kms)
The road from Faizabad to Baharak is primary unpaved road and most of the sections are in very poor condition. The road is often flooded during the rainy season. The road is passable to 6x4 or 6x6 trucks with a capacity of 12mt – 14mt, average transit time of half day for loaded truck. From the center of Baharak to its villages, the road is passable to the size of 6mt to 8mt capacity. The road is at risk of flood, landslide, mudslide, fog, rain and snow.

Baharak district to Warduj district (24 kms)
The road from Baharak to Warduj is dirt road and in very poor condition. The road is passable to 6x4 or 6x6 trucks with a capacity of 10mt to 14mt and with an average transit time of 1 ½ hrs for loaded truck. From the center of Warduj to its villages, the passable size of truck is between 6mt to 8mt capacity. The road is at risk of flood, landslide, mudslide, fog, rain and snow.

Warduj district to Zebak district (59 kms)
The road from Warduj to Zebak is dirt road and all the way in very poor condition. The road is passable to 6x4 or 6x6 trucks with a capacity between 10mt to 14mt and an average transit time of 2½ hrs for loaded truck. From the center of Zebak to its villages, the passable size of truck is between 6mt to 8mt capacity. The road is at risk of flood, landslide, mudslide, fog, rain and snow.

Zebak district to Ishkhashim district (35 kms)
The road from Zebak to Ishkhashim is dirt road and in very poor condition. The road is passable to 6x4 or 6x6 trucks with a capacity of 10mt to 14mt with an average transit time of 2½ hrs for loaded truck. From the center of Ishkhashim to its villages, the passable size of truck is between 10mt to 14mt capacity. The road is exposed to flood, landslide, mudslide, fog, rain and snow.

Central Region
Most of central and central highland region roads run through mountainous areas. However, there are some narrow and flat roads with some paved roads to few provinces. During winter, the road conditions become muddy and icy and access is impossible.

**Route to Jalalabad (via Maheepar, Sorobi).**

Mostly open, the road is asphalted. If inaccessible for any reason there is another route called lataband. This road is not asphalted and longer in distance hence not preferred, it can be used as an alternative route. Routes from Jalalabad city to other districts and Peshawar are mostly accessible (as depicted in below map to Kunar, Sorkhroad, Kama, Shinwar, Kunar…etc), but due to insecurity some southern districts are restricted for movement and sometimes are also inaccessible by commercial trucks.

**Western Region**

Asphalted ring road is the main road connecting Hirat Province to Farah and Kandahar Provinces. Roads connecting Hirat to Islam Qala border, Turghundi to Turkmenistan border Hirat to Qala-have been restored. All other roads are in bad condition.

Some river beds can serve as roads during the summer and winter seasons, but are turned into rivers during spring.

Roads in Badghis province are partially asphalted while in Ghor province are not asphalted. Heavy snowfall makes them impassable during winter seasons. Bridges are non-existent in most areas, with vehicles driving across rivers during the dry summer and winter. With the onset of spring, these crossing points are made impassable by rising water levels from the melting snow.

Roads to Badghis and Ghor centers lead to the following mountain passes:

- Badghis-Sabzak Pass (can be inaccessible during winter and resulting in difficulties to access Qala-e-naw, the provincial capital and the larger Badghis).
- Bayan Pass (Northern route to access Chagcharan, difficult or inaccessible during winter)
- Ghuk Pass (Alternative route to access Chagcharan, inaccessible during winter)

**Primary Roads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legs</th>
<th>Distance in KM</th>
<th>Road surface condition</th>
<th>Terrain</th>
<th>Weather Limitations</th>
<th>Gross Tare Weight</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart-Kandahar</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>All weather</td>
<td>40 MT Max</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat-Islam Qala</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>All weather</td>
<td>40 MT max</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat-Torgundi</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>All weather</td>
<td>40 MT max</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herat-Farah provincial centre</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>All weather</td>
<td>40 MT max</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirat-Ghor/Badhghis provincial capitals</td>
<td>368 / 153</td>
<td>Murram</td>
<td>Mountainous, steep and narrow</td>
<td>Partially constrained by snow, rain and mud</td>
<td>20 Mt during summer &amp; winter</td>
<td>Bad road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Afghanistan Road Network Seasonal Constraints**

Change of season has its potential effects on transportation, especially during the winter which consequently restricts access to some remote areas making some villages inaccessible

**Northern Region**

In general, transportation in Northern provinces is mostly hindered due to heavy winter especially in those places where snowfall and rain start early. In areas prone to landslide and flooding, delivery may be delayed due to temporary road blocks. There are some remote areas like Lawlash and Bandar of Faryab province, Cheras of SAR I Pul province where there is no means of access once the snow starts to fall. It is therefore necessary to pre-position required stocks in these districts prior to commencement of winter.

**Mazar City to Shiberghan-Jawzjan province (136kms)**

The small roads to the villages are muddy/hilly and bumpy. Most of them are impassable during the winter time.

**Shiberghan to Andkhoi/Aqina (110 kms)**

Roads from Andkhoi to Aqina border is muddy and bumpy and during the rainy weather it is hardly passable.

**Mazar to Kabul**

The Salang pass/tunnel restricts transportation towards Kabul or from Kabul towards Mazar as it is prone to heavy snow fall and/or avalanches during the winter season.
North Eastern Region

Generally, transportation in Northeastern provinces is hampered due to rain, snow and flood, combined with the deteriorated condition of the road, the lack of maintenance, the trucks' overloading and the increased traffic over the years. Particularly the bridges in Badakshan that have been washed-away (to date not yet repaired), creating serious transport delays. An earth by-pass road has been created to facilitate the flow of traffic and some traffic passing through the rivers. The road becomes impassable for heavy trucks, particularly in Badakshan area. Smaller trucks also face difficulties resulting in long transit time delays.

In addition to the general bad condition, most of the roads get blocked by snow during winter, and the ones in low-lying areas are prone to blockage by landslides and destruction by floods during the rainy periods.

Western Region

Transport capacity in the western region is hardly affected by the seasons, particularly because, most of the commodities grown in the region are consumed locally (i.e. fruits) and not transported to other parts of the country. In addition, the Iranian border and Torgundi serves as one of the main entry points for most goods entering Afghanistan (through the port of Bandar Abbas) attracting many truckers and resulting in sufficient transport capacity.

Central Region

The winter affects the passes and makes the accessibility really difficult in central and central highland regions. The roads get totally cut off to most part of central highland for the heavy snow i.e. Daikundi, Waras, Lal center of Ghor and Saighan. Transportation in Central region is mostly delayed due to heavy winter especially in those places where snowfall and rain starts early. In addition the heavy snow fall results in an increase in the water level and causes flood and roads to be washed off in spring.

Eastern Region

Transport capacity in the Easter Region is hardly affected by the seasons, particularly because; most of the commodities grown in the region are consumed locally (i.e. fruits, vegetables) and not transported to other parts of the country.

During the winter period (December – February) effects are seen on transportation of commodities to Laghman, Kunar, & Nuristan provinces where areas prone to flood, rock falls, snow, become inaccessible by road. For Nuristan province in particular, the roads are usually accessed by smaller vehicles (pick-ups) but become totally inaccessible in the winter when the roads become muddy.

South Western Region

During the summer season the road condition to all the provinces is generally good. However, in winter and spring seasons some provinces are blocked because of snowfall, heavy rain and flooding.

Road to all districts in Kandahar province are generally good during the dry season while in rainy season the roads to Nesh, Maineshin, Ghorak, Maruf, Shorawak, and Reg districts become impassable.

Uruzgan Province Khas-Uruzgan is one of the worst heavy snowfall affected areas but can be accessed with smaller trucks but prolonged delays can be expected.

During March, April and May water level increases in Helmand River result in trucks being unable to cross Sar-shila (the crossing point on the river to Kang district) of Nimroz province. However, cargo and truck may be loaded on a Ferry in order to cross the river and then continue the trip to the final destination in Kang district centre.

Most roads to districts in Helmand Province are passable throughout the year except few districts like Musa-qala, Baghran, Nawzad, Washir, Deshoo and Khanashin, which are not accessible in the rainy season.

Zabul Province is usually badly affected by the heavy snow fall in the winter. The road condition during dry season is good in all districts, whereas the roads to Arghnadab, Daychoopan, Nwabahar, Shinkay, Shamalzai and Afghar districts are impassable in the rainy season.

South/South Western Region

Transport capacity in the Southern region is severely affected by the seasons. In winter the roads are inaccessible due to heavy snow fall in the mountainous areas. In addition to this, the roads are sometimes blocked in the flat areas, because of the flood caused by monsoon rains and snow melt.