

# Laghman



1st Edition, 1st October 2006

## LAGHMAN INTRODUCTION

Laghman province is one of the thirty-four provinces of Afghanistan. It is in the east of the country and its capital is Mehtar Lam.

Laghman is an evergreen region on the northern banks of the Kabul river which runs parallel to the Kabul-Jalalabad-Peshawar highway.

The town is linked with the main Kabul-Jalalabad highway through an 18 km stretch of a paved road which gives it a better geographical situation comparing to other cities of Eastern Afghanistan.

The main bazaar of Mehtarlam is located at the junction of Ali Nagar; the Ali Nagar replaced the old Tirkery bazaar which is 2 km from Mehtarlam on a hillside. In 19th century Tirkery was a walled city and the seat of the local sardar.

In upper Laghman there is a town named Mandror which faces the ancient, walled city of Charbagh; the city of Charbagh was famous for its armament productions in 19th century, and it is the only town in the region which has its ancient structure and bazaar.

In Sorkhrod valley there are smaller bazaars. Generally all the bazaars are crowded during winters because of the mild temperatures.

In 19th century most of the bazaars in Laghman were run by Hindus. These bazaars were the main routes for travelers and merchants passing between India and Kabul through the Khyber Pass. As a result, many caravansaries were built along this ancient road.

Laghman is one of the evergreen provinces of Afghanistan. Unfortunately due to wrong plans of the former governments and lack of budgets, Laghman did not have the prosperity of some of the other provinces of Afghanistan and was left behind its neighboring province of Nangahar.

The beautiful and scenic surrounding valleys are the natural attractions of this province. These valleys are covered with vegetation and have a rich wild life including the most endangered species of cat on earth the Caspian Tiger. An added treasure to Laghman is the many precious stones: emerald, aquamarine, and tourmaline.

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## Introductory Edition

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# DISTRICTS OF LAGHMAN



## ALINGAR:

Alingar District is located 27 km from Mehtarlam, the provincial capital. It has around 60 villages located in four main valleys.

The Alingar river crosses the district and is the main source of irrigation. The security situation is reported to be relatively stable, although there are some private disputes.

Main crops are Wheat, rice, corn, vegetables and poppy. The district is mountainous, hence there is little arable land. Some of the agricultural land has been destroyed by flooding. There is a need for protective walls and repairs to irrigation intakes. Farmers also stated that they needed pesticides, proved seeds and fertilizer.

Main sources of income are Farming, daily wage labour and remittances from abroad.

It was reported that around 30% of the population work in agriculture, 20% work abroad in Pakistan and Iran, 2% are government employees, 2% traders, and around 45% are without work, the elders stated that as a result they become involved with armed groups and that this causes security problems. Many women work in the fields or carry wood long distances on their backs to sell to traders.

Those who immigrated to Pakistan now are returning to their home town. The returnees are increasing day by day.

## ALISHING:

Alishing District is located 21 km from Mehtarlam, the provincial centre, and borders Kabul Province. It has 12 zones, each with around 12 to 14 villages located in the valleys and mountains. The Alishing river crosses the district and is the main source of irrigation. It is a mountainous district, and many villages are extremely isolated.

The economy of the district is poor. Security in the district is reportedly good during the day, but there are some reports of robberies at night.

There is not much agricultural land because Alishing is a mountainous district. Some rainfed land is cultivated in the hills, however during the dry season these fields are left fallow. Arable land in the plains is irrigated by river and by intakes (which are frequently damaged by flood). Elders stated that there was a need for reconstruction of intakes and protective walls, and also for a free / low-cost veterinary clinic, as there is a high level of animal husbandry. They requested water pumps for irrigation in three locations (Meal, Gona Pal, Saigal) as irrigation here is seasonal, and also expressed a need for fertilizer, proved seeds and tractors for agriculture.

The ethnic breakdown of the district is 60% Pashai, 25% Pashtun, 15% Tajik. Relations between the three groups are reportedly good.



## DISTRICTS OF LAGHMAN

### DAWLAT SHAH:

Dawlat Shah District is located 74 km from Mehterlam, the provincial centre. It is a mountainous district and borders Nuristan to the north, Tagab to the west and Panjshir to the north west. It has 60 villages. The main source of potable and irrigation water in the district is a river which runs through the district from the Farashghan mountains. Communications are poor, and there is just one main road which runs to the district centre.

The community has nevertheless themselves started to construct a road to Farashghan village, and has already completed 20km. They have now sought assistance from WFP for a food for work programme to help them to complete the project. In general, however, there has been little activity by humanitarian agencies in this district.

The majority of the population is very poor. It was reported that due to lack of work most young men are without occupations and many are armed and become involved in criminal activities. Nevertheless, it was reported that Dawlat Shah is has good natural resources, such as forests, fruit and water.

### MEHTERLAM:

Mehterlam district is located in the center of Laghman province and consists of the urban centre and 24 major villages (269 sub-villages). The Alishing and Alingar rivers run though the district. The district extends as far west of the city as Bad Pookh, Garuch, Andror and Sha Kulyyan villages, located 40 km from the urban centre. Pange Pai and Gul Haram villages are located 12 km east of the city and are badly drought-affected.

Many returnee families are reportedly living with friends and relatives.

Many young men are working as labourers in Pakistan and Iran.

Around half of the returnee families are currently rebuilding their homes. The others are either living in partially destroyed shelters or are staying with relatives.

The houses are built in the traditional mountain style - with stones and wood. Some villages were burnt during the Russian war particularly in (Khas Dawlat Shah village, Kalando and Atto) and the rest were destroyed during bombardment by the Russians. Despite this, the district has a good supply of construction materials (wood, stones and clay) and many succeeded in rebuilding their homes.

Good quality potable water is available only from springs, however not all inhabitants of the district have access to these and many use river water, which is not hygienic and causes water-borne diseases. For example, it was reported that in late 2001 / early 2002 cholera killed 13 inhabitants of Atto and Chekla villages. Water is carried long distances by women and girls. Spring water is also not a reliable source as the springs are affected by drought.



## DISTRICTS OF LAGHMAN



### QARGHAYI:

Qarghayi District has 60 villages. It is the largest district in Laghman Province, and is located 30 Km from the provincial centre. The north side borders Nuristan Province, the south borders Nangarhar and the west side borders Sorobi district.

A number of returnees originating from Ambir village, which is located in the mountains, have settled on government-owned land at the edge of Gamberi desert located next to Char Bagh village. They have requested that land be allocated to them, however this has not so far taken place, and they have not received shelter assistance.

Most of the arable land in this district has not been drought-affected, however in a small number of villages the land is affected by drought (Ambir, Kashmund and Sar Khil villages) and in other villages (Sawadi and Locar Lam) some areas of land are threatened by the river.

The most significant minority are the Pashais. As noted below under 'land', in certain areas there have been tensions between the Pashais and neighbouring communities.

Pashai returnees from Ambir village, which is located in an isolated position in the mountains and is drought-affected, have settled on government land on the edge of Gamberi desert, near to Char Bagh village. They are hoping to be included in a scheme for land distribution in Gamberi desert sponsored by Hazrat Ali, head of the Nangarhar army corps and also a Pashai.

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