Afghanistan

First visit: 1967

And so on to the Khyber Pass. Nothing prepared me for the gaunt, rugged grandeur of these dry and forbidding mountains separating Afghanistan from Pakistan. The light and shadow of rock reflected a multitude of colours – browns and greys and purple-blue. The only vegetation consisted of tufts of dry grass interspersed between low scrub. Ahead, the black band of bitumen snaked forward, winding up this historic pass by which invading armies, from Alexander to Babur, gained access to the plains of India. On every hilltop stood a blockhouse or fort, mute testimony to those who attempted to hold the pass. And on every rock face were carved the crests and emblems of the regiments, British and Indian, that either fought their way through the pass, or garrisoned its defences. When we [I had given a lift to an Australian couple] stopped to take photographs, children threw stones – something that had never happened in India. But then it turned out that for 'security' reasons, no photography was permitted through the pass.

Border formalities were negotiated with ease, and we were on the way to Jalalabad, past a giant Soviet-funded irrigation and land reclamation project. Afghanistan at that time was still a monarchy, and King Muhammad Zafir Shah maintained friendly relations with both sides of the Cold War. As a result, the U.S and the USSR competed to provide development aid, mainly for agriculture, hydroelectricity and road construction. The spectacular road from Jalalabad to Kabul passed a couple more of these projects as it wound along the gorge of the Kabul River and up over a high and windy plateau before dropping down into the valley beyond.

Afghanistan interested me in a way that Pakistan had not. The centre of gravity of Pakistan lay in the Punjab; and while the Pathan of Peshawar and Swat signposted another world, not until Kabul did that world become reality. While in Kabul I read a new (in 1967) book on Afghanistan by John C. Griffiths, who subsequently followed it up with studies on the conflicts that followed the overthrow of the king in 1973, first the Taliban against the Russians, and then against the U.S..

Surprisingly, Kabul had the makings of a modern city, more cosmopolitan than Lahore insofar as its citizens were more varied in dress and looks. Men in tribal dress, flowing robes and assorted headgear shared the footpath with others in business suits, while women, and schoolgirls too, wore everything from fashionably short dresses to full burqa. Sikhs seemed at home, though rare as hen's teeth in Pakistan; and among the Afghan ethnic groups – Pathan, Uzbek, Tajik – the Hazara stood out for their Mongol features. And then there was a strong Russian presence. But

the modern architecture was a façade: down narrow alleyways off main thoroughfares mudbrick houses quickly revealed how impoverished most Afghans really were.

Over the next three days I had the Kombi serviced, picked up mail and wrote letters, read, visited the National Museum, and wandered the bazaars, where I bargained for Afghan sheepskin coats for Elisabeth and myself. The Museum was surprisingly good. Apart from the famous Begram ivories, which were stunning, the collection included stuccoes excavated from the great Buddhist stupa at Hadda, near Jalalabad, and frescoes from Bamiyan, all bearing witness to when the Kabul region was a flourishing centre of Buddhism. Also fascinating were folk-like wood carvings from Nuristan, that remote tribal area in the northeast of Afghanistan that was forcibly converted to Islam as recently as 1895, including figures on horseback and standing 'kings'.

I wanted to drive up to Bamiyan to see the gigantic rock-face Buddhas later criminally destroyed by the Taliban, but we were told the road was impassable. So instead I took the road to Mazar-i-Sharif up to the Salang Pass, where the Russians had built the highest road tunnel in the world (at 3,300 metres), and on to Pol-e-Komri, where the road north to Kunduz and what was then the Soviet frontier (now Tajikistan) branched off from the highway to Mazar.

Another spectacular drive, at first across undulating cropland north of Kabul, and then up into the Hindu Kush, hugging the slopes of a narrowing rocky valley with the torrent below and tiny picturesque villages perched on slopes wherever a couple of acres of flat land provided sustenance. Close to the pass the road climbed so steeply that I had to put the Kombi in first gear. The tunnel entrance was just above the snow line, while the hairpin bends of the old mule trail continued up over the pass. We got out and looked back. It was bitterly cold.

The tunnel was dimly lighted, the roadway rising at first, then gently descending to the exit two and a half kilometres away. But it was a pretty incredible piece of engineering. From the exit, a long descent took us down to the valley floor, where fields of golden rice were being harvested. The scenery reminded me of Swat, the same ice-cold river running shallow over grey stones, and fruit trees on the lower slopes. At Pol-i-Komri we went with a young German couple to a French archaeological excavation of an ancient Zoroastrian sun temple, its white limestone columns glowing in the sunset. The temple was built on a low hill, which afforded a fine view down the valley. We spent the night beside the road, had a leisurely breakfast, and motored slowly back to Kabul.

We took the American-built highway from Kabul to Herat, via Ghazni and Kandahar. South of Kabul small villages dotted the landscape, each made up of family compounds with high mudbrick walls, within which women could work unveiled, seen only by their menfolk. At each corner substantial turrets had been constructed, complete with gun slits. These were villages built for conflict and defence, whether due to blood feuds between clans or against nomad raiders, I could only guess.

From Ghazni to Kandahar the road followed what can best be described as a flat valley, five or more kilometres wide, defined left and right by jagged mountain ranges. Some irrigated fields along the river were being ploughed for winter crops. Further away, herds of camels, sheep and goats were grazing, shepherded by turbaned tribesmen on spirited horses. Here and there nomad tents. Along the road, people walked or rode donkeys – women with veiled faces wearing calf-length red dresses, girls with mirror-embroidered blouses and silver jewellery, young boys in turbans too large for them. A file of camels plodded along, the halters of each tied to the tail of the animal in front.

In Kabul the hippie community was dispersed around the city, but in Kandahar there was just one hotel, the Pashtunistan, where foreigners congregated. Robin and Jean scored a room and I parked out the back. The talk was of travel, and how a Dutch guy had just been arrested for robbing other hippies of cash and passports. Joints were circulating and we toked up, until the Afghan music sounded like big band swing, and we were high for the night.

In the morning Jean and I went early to the dirty and rather smelly bazaar, where I bought a colourful carpet bag and where we had breakfast. Back at the hotel, I ran into Abdul Ahmed, the general factotum whose job it was to minister to the needs of odd foreigners. Abdul had taught himself his own English in which males and females were referred to as ‘he’ and ‘she’. Three girls staying at the hotel were ‘the three she’, while he referred to his wife as ‘my she’. He had seen her in the bazaar when she was 14, and paid a bride price of 30,000 afghanies (in those days a bit less than £200). Abdul had a small store of women’s magazines, which he kept at the hotel – because as he confided, pointing to an ad for underwear, “Afghan she no like”. He, on the other hand, did like.

The other interesting Afghan I met in Kandahar was Azizullah, whose speciality was hash smuggling. He was not much older than me, fluent in English, and I didn’t trust him further than I could kick him. Over a two-hour conversation and tea Azizullah explained how he had to give

many presents to keep his business afloat. Hence his relatively high prices. And he told story after story of how hippies he had supplied – they all seemed to be girls – had successfully smuggled hash back to Europe (in their bras, in their dreadlocks, in a drink bottle). His favoured methods, however, were to secret the hash in a tin of jam (canning of specified amount done in Kandahar, jam label provided); and to send it by mail to a false name at a poste restante address. Both added US$10 to the cost of the hash, plus another US$50 to bribe Afghan officials. Azizullah was also informative about how to enjoy hashish, smoked or eaten, accompanied by fresh milk, oil, sweets of every kind, tea, and sex. In the end I bought only one small, flat, 50 afghani sample to compare to my Chitral Black.

From Kandahar to Herat, the road passed through even more desolate country, broken only by a patch of green where the U.S. had built an irrigation system on the Helmand River. In Herat I seriously lost my temper when a teller at a bank tried to obtain a small bribe. I had watched in Kabul as policemen closed access to a building site, sending men pulling heavy cartloads of bricks on a long detour unless they paid a few afghanies. I categorically refused to pay, and roundly abused the teller. Half an hour later my rage had vanished – but the incident can have done nothing for Afghan-foreign relations.

Second visit: 1971

From Mashhad to the Afghan border the road ran through desolate country with a haze of dust over the hills and an abrasive hot wind blowing. Elisabeth and I had to eat in the car. The huddled mud-brick villages farmed parched and straggly wheat fields and a few sheep and goats. The Afghan frontier was a line in the dirt. The Iranians seemed pleased to see us go, with minimum formalities. Afghan officials were more interested in extorting baksheesh than stamping our carnet and visas. But at last we were on our way – only to run out of petrol!

Elisabeth was terrified, and I was worried because while camping in Mashhad we had heard a story about a young couple who had stopped in an Afghan village and been kidnapped. The man was held incommunicado while the woman was gang raped so often she went out of her mind. I could never verify the story, but from where we had stopped we could see a village off the road. I certainly had no intention of going there to get help, so there was nothing for it but to wait for another vehicle, and hope they were not Afghan and had petrol.

We were in luck. Some German hippies in a Kombi stopped and gave us five litres, enough to get us to the town of Islam Qala a few kilometres on where we could fill the tank. So on to Herat

where we parked where I did four years before, in the grounds of the Herat Hotel. It was already dark, and we were dead tired, so we ate and showered in the hotel for a small fee, and slept in the van.

When last I had passed through Herat on my way to Europe, I had seen nothing of the city. So this time, after a slow start, we drove around the sites. Herat, in the words of the great Persian poet Rumi, had once been the pearl in the oyster that was Khorasan, the region of central Asia comprising northeast Persia, western Afghanistan and southern Turkmenistan. The monuments that remained – from tombs to madrasas to the mud-brown citadel– were more Persian than Afghan. We stood respectfully at the gateway of the great mosque at the hour of evening prayer as serried lines of kneeling worshippers, turbaned and shoeless, followed the lead of their mullah. It was an impressive display of faith in a tranquil setting in a country that was then at peace.

We had parked for the night on the wide street outside another hotel, but were woken around 1 am by a military patrol and ordered to drive into the hotel grounds, for our safety. We left at seven in the morning and it took a full day to reach Kandahar by five that evening, The road was well-constructed, half its length by the Soviets and half by the Americans, through a lunar landscape of sharp ridges and glaring rock faces, hot, dusty and barren, with not a blade of grass and almost deserted. We stopped only twice, at the Farah and Helmand river crossings, for petrol and a swim to ease the heat.

What we did see along the road were ruins of abandoned villages, with nearby graves marked only by slabs of slate set vertically at head and foot. And yet every so often we passed men squatting beside the road, perhaps waiting for an occasional bus, or sitting astride tiny donkeys, going who knows where in a landscape with not a sign of habitation in sight. Faces lined and browned by sun and dirt. And occasionally a woman in a stony field, far enough from the road for her face to be uncovered.

The poverty of the countryside extended to Kandahar too. The city streets and market area were filthy. I remembered the melon I had bought four years before, the sweetest and most delicious I had ever tasted. This time it was the grape season; small green seedless grapes so sweet that to eat them was like sucking a sugar cube. We parked in the grounds of the Kandahar Hotel, the only place we saw a few foreigners, paid for a much-needed shower, and relaxed in the cool of the evening. But there was nothing to keep us in Kandahar, and we left early the next morning.

Village mosque, alleyway, and villagers in Afghanistan

The road to Kabul was more interesting than the road from Herat. The countryside, though still dry at this time of the year, was obviously more fertile. Right up to Ghazni, and even on to Kabul, we saw quite large tent encampments of nomad herdsmen; usually well away from the road, with herds of camels grazing nearby. A few figures were working in the fields as we approached Ghazni. At one point we saw two men, one pulling a wooden plough, the other guiding it. Graves here were marked by coloured flags rather than slabs of slate. There were even a few trees!

On the road to Kabul, village alleyway, and rooftops, Afghanistan

In Kabul we stopped for a meal at a small restaurant and made enquiries about a place to camp. Directions took us to the Green Hotel, in an old mansion within broad grounds. Others were camped there too, and the dormitory rooms were full of hippies, mostly guys, but girls too. Fixed prices were listed for different rooms (depending on the number of beds) and for camping and using facilities. We ended up staying because next day, when we picked up mail from poste restante, there was a letter from Bob Kaylor, former UPI colleague from Saigon days and then bureau chief in Delhi, asking for a story on hippies in Afghanistan.

The other piece UPI wanted was a general backgrounder on the whole country. For that we looked up the UPI stringer, one Mohammad Bashir Rafique, who turned out to be the Director of the Afghan News Agency, a pleasant, friendly man, quite a bit older than me with a brown, creased face. I told him what UPI wanted, which he knew already. He obviously didn't want to talk in the office, so arranged to pick us up from the hotel later in the afternoon and take us to his house. There I told him who I would need to talk to – someone on politics, someone on the economy, and so on. This he thought would be difficult to arrange; besides, he knew everything about Afghanistan and could brief me. But he was difficult to pin down, and it was clear that I would have to do a round of the embassies. What Mohammad did do was to put me onto stories that he could not himself write without compromising his government position. And these leads kept me busy enough.

The next day, the 20th of August, was a Friday, the Muslim day of prayer, so everything was closed. I took the opportunity to work on the hippy story. The main difference I noted compared with 1967 was in the number of world travellers (or WTs, as some hippies preferred to be called). Before, relatively few heads had made Kabul home, the more entrepreneurial among them in the fur trade, selling Afghan coats and cotton shirts, or running souvenir shops stocked with ancient firearms, daggers, jewellery and rugs. As in Bangkok, all could be found in a couple of hotels, half high on hash. Four years later and hundreds a week were finding their way overland on overcrowded long-haul buses or driving battered Kombi vans, and a whole new industry had grown up to cater for them.

The Green Hotel was one of dozens of old mansions doubling as ultra-cheap rooming houses, with inadequate facilities to cater for 30 to 40 people packed several to a room, and grounds for Kombis to park and camp. Many of the new crop of travellers were students adventuring east for the summer holidays. Others were longer-term residents seeking some kind of revelation in the mystical East. All were looking for drugs, mostly marijuana and hashish. But in some so-called 'needle hotels', several of those lying around in a semi-trance bore the marks of heroin addiction, skin and bone, with the tell-tale puncture points of injection. One boy we got to know at the

Green Hotel was only sixteen, painfully thin and with sunken eyes. He had only got as far as Kabul, where he had graduated from hash to become hooked on heroin. Sadly, when we were in India, we heard he had died of an overdose.

The Green Hotel accommodated a cross-section of this new influx of young Westerners. As we looked the part and were camping in a Kombi, it was easy to meet and chat. No need to tell them I was a journalist. For the most part they were a peaceable lot, soft spoken and non-judgemental – except for when the toilet was blocked again, or there was no water! Bad experiences were accepted as part of the scene: "Just the Afs doing their thing, man." But we did meet two girls travelling together who had been so traumatised by the way they had been treated in Turkey and Iran that they could not face going back overland. In Kabul they were much less likely to be touched. Not that they thought the Afghans respected Western women more; rather they thought they were too proud to acknowledge them. So the girls were hanging around Kabul, waiting for money from their families to buy plane tickets back to Europe.

I read the relationship between Afghans and the hirsute, ragged crowd that had descended upon them rather differently. It was not pride so much as disdain that led most Afghans to keep their distance. That and no common language or culture. Hippies were foreigners and non-believers – and so to be kept at a distance to avoid contamination. No meeting point was possible. Islam allows no tolerance: for as god's final word it enshrines absolute truth.

This was brought home to me while working on another story I wrote, following a tip-off from Mohammad. A Swedish missionary had been arrested for handing out free bibles in the Bazaar, and was being held under house arrest in a hotel. So Elisabeth and I went around. At the time, Sweden did not have an embassy in Kabul, so some other European country (Germany, I think) was negotiating the man's release. The attendant on the desk must have thought we were on official business, for we were directed immediately to the third floor where the missionary was confined.

It was not difficult to locate his room as a policeman was sitting outside in the corridor. I gestured at the door, and the policeman shook his head. But a few afghanies helped and he went for a walk. Inside we found Sven, a middle-aged man of god, quietly reading his bible. It didn't take long to understand his motivation for coming to Kabul: it was to do god's will. He only managed, however, to distribute half a dozen bibles (translated into Dari) before he was apprehended. That was three months ago, and he was still confined. Things could have been

worse. He could have been imprisoned, for it was a crime to attempt to convert a Muslim to any other religion. As it was, he was comfortably accommodated and given three hotel meals a day. He had been told he would be expelled from Afghanistan, but had no idea when. Mohammad filled in the gaps and I wrote up the story.

Another tipoff from Mohammad sent us to a prison where young foreigners were being held on charges of drug possession. This seemed incredible. If Afghan law banning possession of drugs were to be universally applied, virtually every hippy in the country would be incarcerated. So I decided to investigate. I could hardly pass myself off as an embassy official as I had to the man on the desk at the hotel where Sven, the missionary, was being held; because permission to talk to a prisoner would have to come from the governor of the prison. Nor could say I was a journalist, as Afghan authorities, According to Mohammad, did not want to publicise the fact that young foreigners were being held in Afghan jails. So we passed ourselves off as friends bringing food for the prisoners, something families often did for Afghan prisoners.

When we applied to the prison authorities for permission to visit, the one thing that was specified was no pictures. But as I was going to do a story on these guys, that was precisely what UPI would want. So we decided to smuggle in a camera, despite the danger of being caught – or at least Elisabeth did. She accompanied me to the prison in full Muslim garb, with a headscarf, a dress to her ankles, and a capacious handbag with pastries and a camera hidden underneath. Our bet was that the guards would not search her, and we were right.

The prison set aside for foreigners was in the old Kabul fire station, which was constructed on the model of an old-style caravanserai. Around a central courtyard were tall arched recesses where fire engines had once been parked. Off each one opened rooms where fire crews had once slept. Inmates could spend the day in the airy recesses, lounging around or reading, while guards patrolled the courtyard. There must have been thirty odd prisoners in all, from a dozen nationalities. We were introduced first to three Englishmen in their mid-twenties. They were grateful for the pasties, and happy to talk.

Their incarceration turned out to be more complicated than we suspected. Possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use was usually overlooked – unless a foreigner got into a dispute of some kind with an Afghan who had the connections necessary to have him arrested. And even then an appropriate payment – either to the offended party or the police would be enough to avoid arrest. Problems arose, however, where larger quantities of drug were involved.

During the nineteen fifties, hashish and raw opium had been relatively easy to obtain in Turkey and Iran. But in the sixties, under foreign pressure, both countries tightened their drug laws and policing – just as the countercultural generation increased demand. Drugs were still cheap and plentiful in Afghanistan, however. In 1971, a kilo of hash in Kabul cost between 10 and 25 dollars US, depending on the quality. Sold pretty well anywhere in Europe, it would fetch US$500. So the incentive to risk smuggling a supply was considerable.

Here the Afghans were most obliging. You could buy hashish already sealed in a can complete with a fruit salad label (if you were prepared to trust the product); or packed into a camping gas cylinder; or sewn into a fluffy toy. For larger quantities, a garage in Kandahar would install additional petrol tanks or a false floor in your Kombi. All these cost money; but smuggling expenses did not stop there. You had to know who to pay off. Afghans well understood the profits to be made, and they wanted a cut. Most dangerous of all was the possibility that your dealer was in league with the police, who would immediately arrest the purchaser, confiscate the drugs, and return them to the dealer for a substantial 'reward' – so effectively dividing the take.

And this was exactly what had happened to our three Englishmen. Within two hours of purchasing 25 kilograms of hash they were arrested in their hotel room. Brought before a judge, they had been ordered to pay a fine of US$1,250 each, which of course they did not have. So they were being imprisoned until they could pay (which meant waiting for family or friends to come up with the money and cable it to Kabul). Anyone unable to pay had to serve one day for every 50 afghanies of their fine (or US 75 cents).

Others had similar stories: caught trying to mail a souvenir to France; or at the airport, when leaving with a leg in plaster, but no x-ray to reveal the break. In each case the drugs were confiscated, to the benefit of the relevant official – postal clerk, customs officer, police. As I scribbled down the stories, Elisabeth took a couple of quick photographs from behind a cushion, while a prisoner kept guard. We sent the negatives off to UPI with the story, and never saw them again.

Talking to imprisoned hippies sparked my interest in the drug trade and official corruption. Opium poppies were grown as a cash crop pretty well across Afghanistan, and marijuana too. Raw opium and hashish were both readily available; cocaine less so. Trafficking of drugs into Iran had increased in response to suppression of local production under the Shah. But drugs were

also smuggled into Pakistan from Pashtun areas, and north into the Soviet Union from Tajik areas. Heroin was produced in secret refineries, while morphine was manufactured in a government-run facility. Both could be bought, without prescription, across the counter in pharmacies that I discovered were owned by one of the king's brothers. It was this ready availability that was turning potheads into addicts, while the money to be made in a poor country encouraged endemic corruption. Inevitably, availability of cheap drugs translated into increased local addiction – despite all drugs being prohibited (haram) for Muslims.

Because we were constantly on the go, and because I had to write up stories while they were still fresh in my mind, I had no time to write my diary. I did, however, make brief notes on two aspects of Afghan society: on the incompatibility of Islam and socialism, and on sexual mores.

To begin with, socialism was a Western concept; specifically a product of the Protestant Enlightenment – Protestant in that it took for granted that being born equal before god was an existential given; and the Enlightenment in that it took liberty and human dignity to be achievable goals. By contrast, Catholicism was ineradicably hierarchical – and so, despite the symbolic equality of lines of worshippers, was Islam. The mullahs were to be obeyed as unquestioningly as were Arab tribal chiefs. Society extended no further than the clan. One had a duty to Allah, but not to all fellow human beings, which was the core of socialism. One of the pillars of Islam might be *zakat* (alms giving), but once the money was handed over, one had no further responsibility. For Muslims, socialism was an imported ideology, not an existential commitment – even though for some, Marxism had become a political faith. Once the revolution was achieved, however, I had little doubt its leaders in any Muslim country would be as authoritarian as Stalin or Mao.

Nothing illustrated the deeply hierarchical nature of Muslim societies better than relations between men and women. Patriarchy within the family precluded any suggestion of equality. Separating boys and girls from puberty eliminated any possibility of mutual respect. In Muslim societies, women were objects of possession – for a price. More than once Elisabeth was taken to be Japanese and asked how much a girl cost in Japan, by which they meant the bride price. In poor countries it might take a man until middle age to save up to buy a wife. And then she would be little more than a child. In the meantime, there were always young boys – especially in Afghan society where so-called 'dancing boys' were no more than child prostitutes. And homosexuality was haram in Islam, punishable by death. The utter hypocrisy of it disgusted me.

The longer we stayed in Afghanistan, the more evident it was why Mohammad could not write the stories I was following up. Writing about the drug trade or corruption would be to invite a knife in the back, and it was not something I intended to do while still in the country – just in case our van got searched. I did, however, write up stories about Sven, the missionary, the hippie scene and our visit to the foreigner's prison, ready to post from Pakistan.

I had one story still to do: the backgrounder. In 1971 Afghanistan, though nominally a constitutional monarchy, was ruled by king Mohammad Zahir Shah. Since he came to throne in 1963, his 'experiment in democracy' had produced few reforms, a fractious parliament, and a series of short-serving prime ministers. In addition to political instability, the economy was in freefall thanks to a combination of low investment, chronic corruption and a severe drought. As if this wasn't enough, the king's cousin and brother-in-law, Mohammed Daoud Khan, was plotting in the wings to seize power. He took his chance two years later. While the king was in Italy under medical care, Daoud abolished the monarchy and proclaimed Afghanistan a republic. Five years later he was assassinated and the country spiralled down into civil war that has outlasted invasion and occupation.

Mohammad, our UPI stringer, somewhat reluctantly filled me on enough of the factional politics for me to pose pertinent questions to information officers and political attachés in the British and American embassies. In the meantime, Mohammad wheedled us an invitation to a government reception for a visiting UN delegation. A government car would pick us up: the Kombi would not do. So Elisabeth and I unpacked our best clothes and waited in front of the Green Hotel. I don't know who was more surprised, our hippie acquaintances to see us being picked up in an official black limousine, or the government driver to discover where we were staying. Either way, our cover was blown. The residents of the Green Hotel, fearing a drug bust, kept us at arm's length, while Afghan security began to take an interest in us.

Over the next couple of days we became to suspect that we were being followed: not walking along the street so much as when we drove anywhere in the Kombi. The second afternoon I watched in the rear vision mirror as a black car followed our every turn. This was really worrying. If we were stopped and searched, the Afghan police could charge us with drug possession, even though we only had a couple of rounds of hashish in the glove box. So in a panic I told Elisabeth to throw them out. Which she did. Better to be clean than sorry. As it turned out, we were neither stopped not searched.

After ten days in Kabul, we said goodbye to Mohammad and drove via Jalalabad to the Pakistan border (where the formalities were agonising), and down through the Khyber Pass to Peshawar. I had thought of posting my Afghan stories from Peshawar or Lahore, then cross into India and head north to Kashmir; but instead we decided to drive straight to Delhi, write up a couple more Afghan stories, and get Bob Kaylor to despatch the lot directly to UPI Asia in Tokyo. The drive took three days.