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Bati Tiwari, Hindustan Times
 Email Author
 New Delhi, November 14, 2007

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Want to visit the 'Land of the Afghans', right here at Delhi. Here's the opportunity for you to do so. The 27th India International Trade Fair (IITF) at Pragati Maidan kiosks 40 Afghan businesses, giving you a taste of Afghani culture and goods.

The US Agency for International Development's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project has partnered with the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) to facilitate the participation of 40 Afghan companies.

"Afghanistan plans to revive its trade linkages with India through this fair," says ASMED's senior business development & management services advisor Sunirmal Ray.

The stalls have varied items to woo you. From beautifully-woven carpets, dry fruits, honey, medicinal herbs to precious stones, junk jewellery, garments and accessories, they are all there to catch your breath. Most of the participants are from Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Konduz and Kabul.

It is also heart warming to see traders cater to regional and contemporary demands. Carpet merchant Hamayun says, "We have concentrated on giving more of red colour in the carpets as it suits the Indian taste."

Another stall owner Mohammad Aziz says, "Apart from ladies overcoats, shoes and wallets, we have also come with mobile cases this time as many youngsters go for them."

Around eight Afghani women merchants are also participating in the fair, which shows the emancipation of women in the country after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 in which the ruling Taliban government was toppled.

So what are you waiting for? Grab your purse and head for the fair so that the dreams of all Afghani-ware sellers come true. *Insha Allah!*

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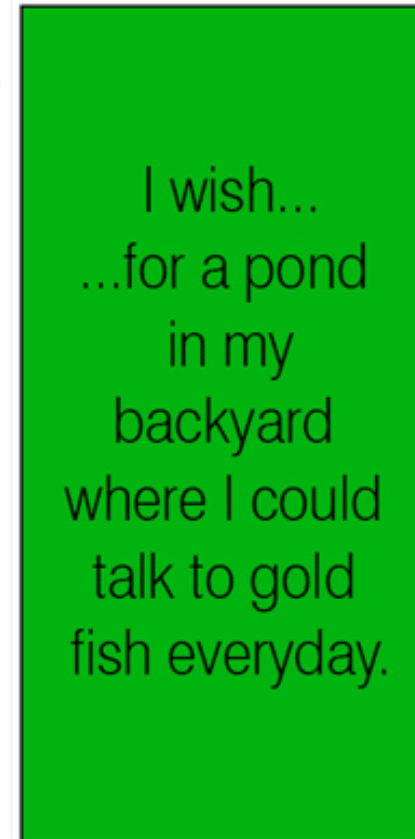
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