

Tunnel Opens Opportunities for Truckers



Photo by USAID

“Last year, once in a while, it was open. This year they are trying very hard to keep it open steadily. My lifeline is just this truck. I have no other income.”

**Muhammed Nasim
Truck Driver**

“If the tunnel is open and the road is good, my income will go higher and the whole world will be happy. Then I will have no headache.”

**Nizamuddin
Truck Driver**

Before the reopening of the Salang Tunnel, the road between the Afghan capital Kabul north through the towering Hindu Kush mountains to Mazar-e-Sharif was nearly impassable in winter. Without a rail system, landlocked Afghanistan is dependent on its roads and airports to bring in food, commercial goods, fuel, and other necessities from outside the country. Thus, in the winter months, keeping the 2.6 mile-long Salang Tunnel and 42 miles of road at its northern and southern approaches cleared of avalanches and open to traffic is a daunting but vital task. USAID quickly funded a project that led to the reopening of the tunnel on January 19, 2002. To keep the tunnel open for the winter of 2002-2003, USAID provided \$1.6 million to clear snow, make emergency repairs, and manage the tunnel traffic. This single project has had a powerful impact on the economy of Afghanistan and the life of Afghans.

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