



## **Afghanistan International Marble Conference II**

### ***Afghanistan's Resource Advantage***

**Herat, Afghanistan**

**April 12 – 16, 2010**

#### **About Herat**



Believed to date back more than 2,700 years, the ancient city of Herat is the largest city in western Afghanistan and is the main trade city for exports to Iran, Turkmenistan and the Middle East. Its citadel was first built by Alexander the Great in about 330 BC. Over time following numerous conflicts, much of the citadel was destroyed and rebuilt by successive rulers. The present day structure is largely the work of Shah Rukh in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Later, the Citadel was used as a royal residence, treasury, prison and arsenal under the Afghan Kingdom that followed Safavid rule in 1747.

Herat is the site of the Masjed-e-Jameh or Blue Mosque, an important pilgrimage center built more than 800 years ago and noted for its beautiful blue tile flowers and mosaic decoration. The mosque is the largest building in the city and a significant example of Islamic architecture.

Herat is situated in the valley of the Hari Rod River which flows from the mountains of central Afghanistan and is about 110 kilometers east of the Iranian border. With a population of approximately 400,000 people, Herat is the third largest city in Afghanistan, after Kabul (3 million) and Kandahar (470,000).

Herat is an important business and industrial center with the most advanced industrial park in Afghanistan. Factories located at the industrial park include soft drink bottling companies, concrete and rebar manufacturing, small engine and motorcycle assembly plants and 15 marble processing plants.

Herat Airport, also known as Herat Airfield (IATA code: HEA), is 6.5 miles (10.5 km) southeast of Herat, just east of the Herat-Farah road, in the Guzara District. Herat is considered an important hub for civil aviation in Afghanistan and domestic flights in and out of Herat Airport connect the city with Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, and other cities. Domestic carriers serving the airport are: Ariana Afghan Airlines, Kam Air, Pamir Airways, and Safi Airways.