

## OUR SINGAPORE: ONE PEOPLE, MANY CULTURES.

An Arab Street carpet shop

This carpet is designed and hand-made in Iran, which has a long history of carpet making. The intricate geometric designs are one of the trademarks of carpets from Iran. They are also called Persian rugs, as Persia is the old name of Iran. The owner of this shop also comes from Iran.

This is a carpet from Afghanistan, another centre of carpet making. Singapore's oldest existing carpet shop, Amir & Sons, was set up by an Afghan, Amir Mohammed Khan, in 1921.

This shop is on Arab Street, named after Arabs who gathered there in the early 19th century. They were major traders and merchants. Other streets in this area also honour Singapore's links with Western Asia: Baghdad Street, Kandahar Street and Muscat Street are named after cities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Oman, respectively. Not far away, Aljunied Road is named after Syed Sharif Omar bin Ali Aljunied, an important businessman from Yemen who was welcomed to Singapore by Stamford Raffles in 1819.

Today's carpets are often products of different cultures. This carpet is made in Afghanistan but is based on a Kazakhstan design.

The shop has a large selection of prayer rugs, used by Muslims when they pray. They are kept clean and placed on the floor only during prayer time. This rug has a picture of the Kaaba on it. This cube-shaped structure in the Arabian city of Mecca is Islam's most sacred site. Muslims face it when they pray.

This series by **WHAT'S UP** - Singapore's newspaper for students - takes a closer look at our country's many colourful cultures. Also online at <http://www.whatsapp.sg> 'ONE PEOPLE'.

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