Monthly Greetings to you from the Embassy

Greetings to you, dear friends.

Welcome to the first edition of the redesigned & renamed newsletter from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Japan. Truly, we hope the new features of “The Heart of Asia Herald” will be as enjoyable to you as they are informative & enlightening. We sincerely hope you will grow even fonder of the sights, sounds, tastes, and rich history of Afghanistan with each newsletter. Please share your thoughts with us or any ideas on how to make The HAH more interesting and enjoyable. May your days be warm, happy, and filled with sunshine and luck.

Message from “The Heart of Asia Herald” Editors:

On April 20, 2017, the embassy bid farewell to H.E. Dr. Sayed M. Amin Fatimie & Madam Wahida Fatimie at the end of their mission. His Excellency Dr. Sayed Mohammad Amin Fatimie finishes his mission in Japan.

On April 20, 2017, the embassy bid farewell to H.E. Dr. Sayed M. Amin Fatimie & Madam Wahida Fatimie at the end of their mission. H.E. Dr. Fatimie’s mission officially began December 27, 2010 when he presented his credentials to the Emperor of Japan at the Imperial Palace. Over the 6 years and 4 months of his mission he helped to further strengthen and nurture the bridge of relations between the noble nation of Japan and Afghanistan.

Over H.E. Dr. Fatimie’s tenure in Japan, he had the honour of seeing many significant events in bridging the relations between Japan and Afghanistan occur. From his many accomplishments, such as the Project for the Promotion and Enhancement of the Afghan Capacity for Effective Development (PEACE) program, and the fundraising for the devastated March 11th Tohoku Earthquake.

The PEACE program was launched by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2011, to provide public officials and public officers the opportunity to attain a master’s or other graduate programs in Japan. After graduation, all students are expected to return to Afghanistan to utilise their new profound knowledge for the sake of the development in Afghanistan.

For the fundraising of the March 11th earthquake, H.E. Dr. Fatimie was one of the key players for the mobilisation of Afghan residents in Japan. H.E. Dr. Fatimie hosted meetings and briefings for the fundraising at the Embassy and provided the necessities to pass-over the 1,851,000 yen raised, and pictures drawn by children in Afghanistan. H.E. Dr. Fatimie, diplomats and staff of the Afghan Embassy, and the Afghan residents in Japan had wholeheartedly shown the strong connection of the noble nation of Japan and Afghanistan.

The Heart of Asia Herald—Newsletter for the Embassy of Afghanistan in Japan

The happenings & events pertaining to Afghan-Japan Relations.

Inside this issue:

Monthly greetings, and H.E. Dr. Fatimie’s End of Mission

Progress & Developments in Afghanistan, and Current Afghan-Japanese Relations

FEATURE STORY: The benefits of Award Winning Afghan Saffron

An Introduction to Laghman Province

Notable Afghans: Aryana Sayeed and PEACE scholar Aminullah Sabawon

Cooking Qulfi Pops and Upcoming Events
Afghan Progress:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trilateral Exchange</th>
<th>Health Sector</th>
<th>Security</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A major step forward in foreign affairs was taken on May 27th in the form of a “Practical Cooperation Dialogue” held in Beijing, between distinguished officials of China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The event was convened to begin discussions regarding China’s “One Belt One Road” initiative, and was co-chaired by Director General Xiao Qian of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director General Khalid Payenda, Senior Advisor to Afghanistan’s Minister of Finance, and Director General Mansoor Ahmad Khan of Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The discussion proceeded so well it was agreed by all to make the “Practical Cooperation Dialogue” a regularly occurring event, with the next round of talks to be held in Kabul.</td>
<td>A recent World Bank report shows significant strides in Afghan healthcare. The report credited a dramatic increase in the number of hospitals, health professionals, and availability of female healthcare providers as the primary positive factors in the recent medical trends. Importantly, the mortality rate of children under five years of age fell by a dramatic sixty percent, and today over half of all-births in Afghanistan are attended by healthcare professionals. The Senior Director for Health Nutrition and Population for the World Bank, Dr. Timothy Evans, said in a June 1st healthcare summit in Kabul, “Afghanistan has set a new benchmark against which to judge other countries affected by conflict, and even more so low income countries that are not facing conflict.”</td>
<td>In May 2017, Afghan Special Forces alongside Polish Special Operations soldiers conducted a successful rescue mission on a compound in Helmand Province where 11 hostages were being held in Taliban captivity. The soldiers struck swiftly and decisively, denying the enemy what they thought would be a bargaining chip as they successfully rescued all hostages. In addition, on April 27 of this year, a raid by Afghan National Army Commando teams and US Army Rangers in Nangarhar Province killed the top leaders of the foreign terrorist group known as Daesh, and eliminated dozens more of their fighters in a devastating blow to that group.</td>
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Afghan-Japan Relations:

- The past Quarter has seen continuous meetings with Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) and Japan International Coopération Agency (JICA) about the promoting trade between Afghanistan and Japan.

  Afghanistan, JETRO, and JICA are trying their utmost best to decrease security concerns in Afghanistan in order to enhance investment potential. They are also trying to promote Afghan goods into the Japanese market.

- At the 4-day, 50th Asian Development Bank annual meeting of the board of governors in Yokohama, Afghan delegates, H.E. Dr. Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor, Deputy Minister for Finance & Senior Advisor and Special Representative to H.E. the Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Mr. Abdul Qahar Khan Momand, Program Coordination Office and Aid Management Directorate for Ministry of Finance of Afghanistan, and the diplomats of the Afghan Embassy had the pleasure of talking to and discussing Afghanistan and Japan relations with the President of ADB Mr. Nakao, the, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Finance of Japan H.E. Mr. Toru Miki, Governor of the Bank of Japan and former President of the ADB Mr. Haruhiko Kuroda, and Senior Vice President Mr. Hidetoshi Iriyuki as well as several other representatives from different departments of the ADB.

- Signing the Extension of Non-Project Grant MoU between Afghanistan and Japan

  The Japanese Government have been willing to extend the Non-Project Grant between Afghanistan and Japan. This grant will provide JPY 400 million, in order to assist economic and social growth, and development in Afghanistan in the areas of agriculture, education, and health.

- Dr. Mohabbat attended the reception in commemoration of the Annual General Assembly for 2017 of the Overseas Construction Agency Japan, Inc. (OCAJI) where he had the pleasure of talking to the President of OCAJI, Mr. Toru Shiraiishi, about the present and future plans of construction in Afghanistan.
Afghanistan’s saffron is recognized as one of the world’s best and various foreign markets with a reputation of having excellent quality in its flavour, aroma and colour. Afghanistan’s saffron has won 3 out of 3 stars at the Superior Taste Award for two consecutive years (2013 – 2015) which was organized by the International Taste and Quality Institute in Brussels, the capital of Belgium.

Saffron production has been expanding efficiently in Afghanistan. Amongst the provinces of Afghanistan, Herat has been producing up to 3000kg of saffron annually.

Saffron is well-known as both a spice and herb, acquired from the flower, Saffron Crocus. Saffron is used as a spice for colouring and seasoning in European and middle-eastern dishes. It is also used as a medical herb in Chinese medicine for diseases such as cardiovascular and menstrual disorders. Recent animal testing has proved that saffron has anti-cancer effects of both preventing tumours from grow-

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**Health Benefits of Saffron**

- Stimulates hair growth and combats hair loss
- Eases bloating and constipation
- Prevents cancer and kills tumour cells!
- A good mood enhancer and helps reduces stress
- Increases blood circulation and metabolism
- High concentrations of nutrients which stimulates health immunity
- Skin complexion benefits such as fairer and clearer skin
Province Focus: LAGHMAN

“*This river is the river of life. It contains within itself the powers both of destruction and prosperity alike.*”

-Selection from ‘The River’ by Gul Pacha Ulfat

With wide flowing rivers, bountiful vegetation, and precious gemstones, Laghman is one of the most beautiful, serene, and important provinces of Afghanistan. An important center of Buddhist civilization under Ashoka the Great, today Laghman is a significant source for agriculture, with water from the famous Alingar and Alinshang rivers being irrigated to produce such products as rice, wheat, oranges, and apricots. Laghman’s produce can be found all over the country, even in Kabul. The region can also boast of being blessed with many precious stones and minerals, such as Tourmaline and Kunzite.

But agricultural products, gemstones, and rich scenery are not all that this province has to offer. Laghman is a diverse, multi-ethnic region, with a population consisting of 51% Pashtuns, 21% Tajiks, and 27% Pashai and Nuristani, which maintains a robust civil society. Education is highly valued, as the province operates nearly 300 schools at all levels. The Laghman Art Movement, the Independent Union of Eastern Writers and Journalists, and the Women Rights Support Society all provide opportunities for citizens to become involved in public life. Artists and statesmen alike have hailed from this province, many of whom have played a profound role in transforming the destiny of Afghanistan.

FAMOUS PERSONALITIES FROM LAGHMAN PROVINCE

Maj. General Tariq Shah Barami
Acting Minister of National Defense.
Graduated from Kabul military school in 1986 & embarked on career in the Air Force. After the fall of the Taliban, he worked in various security departments, including as commander for the 444 Special Unit of the Afghan National Police. Most recently he served as Chief Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs.

Mohammad Hanif Atmar
National Security Advisor
During his tenure as Minister of Rural Rehabilitation & Development, was able to influence every province by ensuring food security, safe drinking water, suggesting alternatives for drug-economy, and building necessary infrastructure for rural economic development. He is also known for his humanitarian work with various NGOs prior to his service with the government.

Gul Pacha Ulfat
Famous Poet & Author
He was a prominent poet & author who published several books. He was known to be an humble and kind person. In 1951 he founded the Wolas, a national weekly and remained the chief editor of Wolas Weekly until the end of 1953. At the same time he served as a professor at Kabul University, Faculty of Literature and Faculty of Law and Political Sciences.
A pop beat with strong, folk, overtones plays as we see a woman wearing a jacket, sunglasses, and a straw hat coolly lying on a pile of hay in the back of a truck. She leaps off, and walks over to her hotel. She comes out onto the balcony, overlooking the Bamiyan Valley. Then, suddenly, she is among the ruins and sings with a dynamic voice that punctuates and flavours the pop-folk soundtrack. As the video progresses, we see her transition from more Western clothes to a traditional, blue Afghan garb, traverse the Afghan countryside and perform in concerts around the world, and enjoy her vacation while being nagged by her manager to get back to work.

She is Aryana Sayeed, one of Afghanistan’s most popular modern singers, performing her 2015 hit song “Yaar-e-Bamyani.” Born in Kabul, Sayeed’s family left for Pakistan when she was eight, and eventually settled first in Switzerland and then the UK. Since she was young, Sayeed has had a deep passion for singing, and after graduating from college she pursued a career in the music industry. The release of her single “Afghan Pesarak” made her a household name, and subsequently she has performed in hundreds of concerts worldwide, won many music awards, and has been a jury member of the popular TV show Afghan Star.

Sayeed’s music not only synthesizes traditional Afghan folk music with modern pop and hip hop but contains lyrics with timely social commentary, often championing the rights of Afghan women. In her 2015 hit single “Qahramaan,” Sayeed, with a slow, almost ballad-like string accompaniment, powerfully sings the words of a woman’s defiance in a patriarchal world. With the admixture of Afghan folk and pop, Western and traditional dress, and potent, relevant songs, Aryana Sayeed in many respects represents the union of Afghanistan’s past and future. Consequently, she is not only a talented singer and advocate of women’s rights, but a striking symbol of the nation itself.

Profile of Current PEACE Scholar — Mr. Aminullah Sabawon

This month we had a chance to learn a little bit more about one of Afghanistan’s intrepid PEACE scholars studying in Japan, Mr. Aminullah Sabawon. From Logar Province, the Ministry of Higher Education professor has been studying at Waseda University in Tokyo since September 2014, and is a lecturer at Kabul Polytechnic University. Mr. Sabawon told us that he is currently researching the “Jurassic-Cretaceous petroleum system of the Amu Darya Basin, northern Afghanistan,” and aspires to continue his work on national-level projects related to Afghanistan’s minerals.

Mr. Sabawon has thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from his time in Japan, and expressed great admiration for the country’s ability to blend old and new. “Ancient and historical places are well preserved and shrines can be seen everywhere,” he wrote, and “every shrine and temple in Japan holds at least one festival each year.” Mr. Sabawan also remarked how impressed he was by the dedication, work ethic, and manners of the Japanese people.

We wish Mr. Sabawon the greatest fortune as he completes his studies here in Tokyo, and look forward to hearing more about his distinguished work in Kabul.
Afghan Recipe: Soothing Saffron Honey & Mango Qulfi Pops

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<tr>
<th>4 Saffron Strands</th>
<th>330g Yogurt</th>
<th>450mL Almond (or cow) Milk</th>
<th>1 (~130g) Mango (diced &amp; frozen)</th>
<th>36g Honey</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.5mL Vanilla Essence</td>
<td>14g Corn Starch</td>
<td>1 Cardamom Pod (crushed)</td>
<td>100g Pistachios (chopped)</td>
<td>100g Almonds (chopped)</td>
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1. Dissolve corn starch in about 1 tablespoon of milk to make a thick paste. Set aside.
2. In a saucepan, heat the remaining almond milk, cardamom pods, vanilla essence and the saffron making sure not to boil. Add the honey and stir to dissolve.
3. Add the paste to the milk & spice mixture and stir until the paste has dissolved. Cook on low flame until the mixture has thickened. Add to bowl with yogurt, and mix. Allow to cool.
4. Put the frozen mango cubes in a blender and puree finely. Add the puree, pistachios, & almonds to the milk & spice mixture, mix well.
5. Pour the kulfi mixture in popsicle moulds, place the lids on the molds and add sticks through the holes. Optionally, wait until semi frozen before you put sticks in. Freeze popsicles for 8 to 10 hours, preferably overnight.

Upcoming Events

Please watch for more notice about these upcoming events on our Facebook page!

**July**

**August**
- 98th Anniversary of the Independence of Afghanistan.

**September**
- Celebration of Eid al Adha. Maintaining firm relations with Afghan residents in Japan ■ The PEACE scholars Graduation Reception. Increasing human capacity in Afghanistan to further development.