



April, 2012



# Afghan News

## Latest News

### Updates on increasing media and communications sector

Television channels - 75

Radio stations - 160  
Independent publications – about 500

Mobile phone subscribers – nearly 18 million

People with Internet access – 1.5 million  
Internet companies in operation – more than 40



## Meeting on Tokyo Conference held in Kabul

A meeting of representatives of civil society was held on April 14th at the Ministry of Finance in preparation for the upcoming Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan. H.E. Senior Minister Hedayat Amin-Arsala, H.E. Dr. Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, Minister of Finance; H.E. Mr. Shafiq Ahmad Qarizada, deputy minister of policy; other officials of the Ministry, and representatives of civil society came together to discuss the important conference. The conference will focus on future international cooperation, including private sector cooperation, in Afghanistan's continuing development, particularly in terms of the economy and infrastructure.

### 8.4 million children now attending school

The new educational year has officially begun and this year 8.4 million children, 39% of them girls, will go to school nationwide; the largest number ever.

At a ceremony to mark the start of the year, H.E. President Hamid Karzai delivered a speech and rang a school bell. H.E. Minister for Education Farooq Wardak also gave remarks on the occasion.

In other Educational news, a 4-classroom, 1-laboratory building for a vocational high

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school specializing in agriculture was inaugurated in the Rodat district of Nangarhar province. The school was constructed in 5 months

The foundation stone of new 26-classroom building for Syeedkhail district high school was laid by Hon. Governor Abdul Basir Salangi of Parwan province earlier this month. The school is being built with the assistance of the Korea Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), and will be completed within 15 months.

In the Jabal Saraj district of Parwan province, a foundation stone for a 22-classroom high school was laid. The new building will be ready in 15 months.

Kabul Polytechnic University has enrolled over 900 new male and female students this year. The school offers excellent programs in construction, geology and mining, electro-mechanic and computer engineering, and chemical technology. Currently around 3,000 students study at the university (7% of them female). The school has also re-established Masters Degree programs.

### Salahuddin Rabbani appointed Chief of High Peace Council

Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani was unanimously appointed as the new Chairman of the Afghanistan High Peace Council at a meeting of H.E. President Karzai, H.E. Vice-President Marshal Fahim, Hon. Governor Attah Mohammad Noor,

Hon. Governor Sayaf, and the members of the council. Mr. Rabbani follows the legacy of true progress that was started with H.E. former President Burhanuddin Rabbani, which brought thousands over to the side of peace.

### H.E. Foreign Minister Rassoul shares of progress of the peace process at the NATO/ISAF Defense and Foreign Ministerial in Brussels



On April 18 and 19, H.E. Foreign Minister Dr. Zalmay Rassoul, along with H.E. Defence Minister General Abdul Rahim Wardak represented the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan at the NATO and ISAF Foreign and Defense Ministerial meeting in Brussels, Belgium. Among the many key dignitaries in attendance was H.E. Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba of Japan.

At the forefront of discussions were issues related to the preparation for the upcoming NATO summit in Chicago to be held May 20-21, which will focus on the next stage of security operations in Afghanistan. While thanking international allies for their support in security

operations and beyond, H.E. Dr. Rassoul reiterated the commitment to the Afghanization of this sector, stating that “Afghan soldiers [are currently] in control of providing security for at least 50% of the Afghan population,” while also pointing to the continuing work towards a domestic and regional political peace solution: “we’ve also underlined the non-negotiable principles and necessary outcomes for an inclusive, dignified, meaningful peace process: respect for the Afghan Constitution, especially its protections for the rights and freedoms of all Afghan citizens, especially Afghan women; freedom of the press; consolidation of our young democracy; renunciation of violence, and severance of all ties with international terrorists.” H.E. cited that already the Afghanistan Peace and Integration Program has brought over 4000 former anti-government combatants back to the side of peace.

In closing, H.E. Minister Rassoul ended with words both inspirational to the upcoming Chicago and Tokyo conferences: “I have no doubt that, together, our shared determination and resolve is more than equal to the task of building a secure, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan through and beyond the successful completion of the transition process.”

### Ambassador Fatimie attends event hosted by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress at the Imperial Gardens





Ambassador Dr. Sayed M. Amin Fatimie on April 19 attended an event hosted by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress at the Imperial Gardens. The event brought together the diplomatic community in Japan and key Japanese figures to further deepen ties with Their Majesties and the host nation.

On this most special and important of occasions, Ambassador Fatimie had the honor of expressing deepest gratitude to Their Majesties the Emperor, the Empress, the Crown Prince, and members of the Imperial Family for Their generous and noble support to Afghanistan's peace and development; and for further, as esteemed embodiments of the Japanese nation and people's will, graciously ever enhancing the ties between the nations.

Ambassador Fatimie was also able to interact with and express further the sincerest appreciation of the Afghan people and government to a number of key people, including H.E. Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, Hon. Councillor Naoto Kan, H.E. Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Yukio Edano, and H.E. Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba (pictured on page 2). In addition to the warm greetings exchanged with these figures, Ambassador Fatimie's talks with H.E. Minister Gamba were particularly fruitful.

**Ambassador Fatimie, Embassy host a reception in honor of the exemplary service of Madame Sadako Ogata**

On April 10, Ambassador Dr. Sayed M. Amin Fatimie and the Embassy hosted a

lunch reception to honor the exemplary service of Madame Sadako Ogata. Madame Ogata is retired as President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and was well known and highly regarded around the world as a champion of development, empowerment, and peace.

The event brought together more than 100 distinguished supporters and well-wishers from such areas as the Japanese Government, the diplomatic community in Japan, NGOs, and private sector leaders. Speakers included Ambassador Fatimie, H.E. Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Kazuyuki Hamada, and Madame Ogata's successor, Mr. Akihiko Tanaka. Madame Ogata also spoke, sharing reflections of her career in JICA, the encouraging progress she witnessed in Afghanistan, and motivating others to work towards the shared dream of world peace and prosperity. Following the speeches, Ambassador Fatimie presented Madame Ogata with a certificate of appreciation and a lapis vase; representing the Afghan community in Japan, Mr. Haji Hussein, Ms. Sedeka Eto, and Ms. Sultani presented flowers; and Mr. Kohi Amin presented a gift of Afghan artistry.

Among the many key guests attending Madame Ogata's honorary reception were Hon. former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda (pictured below), Hon. Mr. Naoto Sakaguchi, Hon. Ms. Mieko Nakabayashi, Hon. Mr. Haranobu Yonenaga, Hon. Ms. Hiroko Oizumi, Hon. Mr. Hirotaka Matsuoka, Hon. Mr.

Hiroyuki Moriyama, and Hon. Mr. Hiroshi Hamamoto.

**Rural development projects reach tens of thousands**



Two utility projects in Kapisa Province were handed over to their respective communities. One of the projects, a 140-meter bridge in the Jamalagha area, will give access for the 70,000 residents of Sayed Khel and Hes-e-Dowam districts to markets and services in the nearby provinces. The other project, a Community Center in Albironi University, will assist the cultural needs of the residents and students of the University.

**Companies approved for gold, copper extraction**

Following an assessment period, of 41 applying domestic companies and companies from India, the United States, Canada, Britain, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Australia, 25 have been selected for investment in gold and copper mines. The mines are located in a number of provinces, including both copper and gold mines in Zarkashan, Ghazni; gold mines in Badakhshan; and a copper mine in Shedai, Heart. Preparations for mining are set to begin from now.

**Agricultural initiative to support Bamiyan farmers**

On April 1, the Bamiyan Agricultural Support Program (ASP) multi donor program was launched. ASP will provide over 50,000 farmers in 40 Bamiyan-based cooperatives with access to support such as mechanical equipment including tractors, high quality wheat and potato seed, livestock marketing training, small business development support, district veterinary clinics and

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the training of para-veterinarians, potato pack house development, and community-based projects to restore pastureland. All of this will help farmers to feed their families as well as to engage in greater agricultural business.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) will be supported in ASP by the New Zealand Aid Programme, the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team, the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), and USAID.

(photo featuring Governor Sarabi courtesy of the New Zealand Aid Programme)

### **Herat province announces excellent economic growth**

Exports from Herat province have increased by 36% compared to 2010 as a result of a new customs rules, a supportive provincial chamber of commerce, better international trade links, and ever-improving security. Local and Foreign business people have reported increasing satisfaction.

Officially, exports from Herat province amounted to more than US\$30 million between March and September 2011, according to Amrullah Qalandarzoi, head of exports at the provincial customs department. Some of the goods were bound for Iran and Turkmenistan, while others were heading for the Middle East, India, Turkey, and Europe.

Herat province produces saffron, rugs, cumin, marble, animal skins and wool. The carpet industry in western Afghanistan is thriving, employing

some 3,000 workers, most of them female; nearly 60% more rugs were exported to Iran and on to Europe between March and September 2011 than in the same period of 2010. Other sectors are also reporting positive stories.

### **Paktika income increases more than 25%**

Paktika province's income increased by 27% over the past year, according to official reports. This number is likely to increase as further tax collection retroactively occurs. The main sources of revenue were company tax, transport and transit fees, and bank taxes. The reasons cited for the large increase are the positive security situation, good governance and solid development programs.

### **Satellite to be launched within six months**

The first-ever Afghan space satellite will be launched within six months according

to Minister for Communication and Information Technology Amir Zai Sangin. This development will support Afghan television channels and radio stations, including a shift from analogue transmission to digital.

Communications have been steadily increasing domestically since 2001; there are now 75 local television channels and 160 radio stations. Additionally, in other communications achievements, the number of mobile phone subscribers now exceeds 15 million.

The Ministry is now looking for an international company to carry out the launch. In other media news, a professional media training institution, the Nai Media Institute, is being built with the support of Australian training company AMT. The school will award a two-year diploma in media curriculum, including radio, television, and new forms media.

### **Private inventor creates first domestically-made airplane**

Inventor Sabir Shah has after three years privately constructed a one-man "microlight" aircraft at his home in Ghazni province using instructions from the Internet and parts from the local market, including a propeller he made himself from a small Toyota car engine. This is being described as the first airplane ever designed and built in Afghanistan.





As a show of support, H.E. Vice President Abdul Karim Khalili contributed \$1,000 to the project, and the Ministry of Defense provided Shah with transport to an airfield north of Kabul to test his creation, as well as giving him technical advice.

In four tests, the aircraft achieved a maximum distance of about a quarter of a mile.

Shah hopes this attempt will inspire private investment in Afghan aviation and is determined to make a business building airplanes for Afghanistan. He plans to use what he learned to build an eight- to 10-seat airplane that he hopes can be used for domestic travel, and would like to have an opportunity to earn a scholarship to study abroad.

**National team plays first rugby match abroad**



The national rugby team made its international debut in a series of exhibition sevens matches in Dubai against UAE Shaheen, a week before the Asian Five Nations tournament on April 27.

Technical Vice President Abdul Khalil Beg of the Afghan Rugby Federation (ARF) referred to this first international experience as a key step

in the development of Afghan rugby, calling it encouraging for the youth. ARF CEO Asad Ziar added, "We're a rough, tough people. We're physically set for this game, which is very energetic and fast." The ARF won affiliation from the Asian Rugby Football Union in November last year, after having been launched May 20, 2011.

**6 medals captured in Ashihara Karate competition**

The Afghan national team won three silver and three bronze medals at the 18th Karate Ashihara World Competitions, held April 5-8 in Denmark. 11 countries participated in the competitions. Overall, the national team ranked 4th.

The silver medalists were Yahya Ahmadi, Abdul Rahman Izami, and Wahidullah Joya. The bronze medalists were Shahram Harasi, Fareed Aqa Door Andish, and Shir Mohammad.

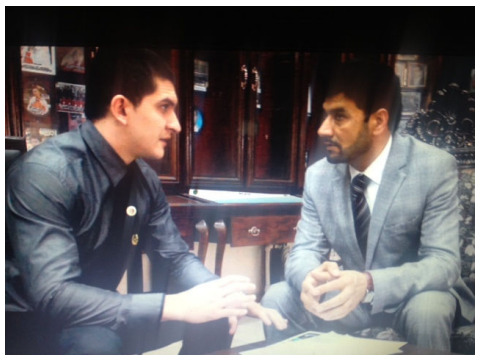
**Tokyo-based bodybuilder organizes sports festival in Kabul**



Friend of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Tokyo, Mr. Evgeny Latypov, successfully organized his "Sports Festival" in Kabul earlier this month. The festival featured multiple activities, including bodybuilding, soccer,

and chess.

Building on the success of this first annual event, Mr. Latypov met with Olympic Committee President General Mohammad Zahir Aghbar who, through his esteemed office, approved the festival series as an official, Olympic Committee-recognized event. Latypov, who serves as the World Fitness Federation (WFF) and World Body Building Federation (WBBF) Vice President for Asia and President for Japan, was also bestowed with an award of honor from General Aghbar for "supporting peace and development through sport in Afghanistan," according to the WFF-WBBF.



Next year Latypov and his supporters intend to hold the event again and to add a women's division.

Mr. Latypov and General Aghbar also announced the intention of fielding an Afghan team at the 2012 WFF-WBBF Open Europe Championship in Bobruisk, to be held May 23 to 25.



**Embassy of Afghanistan in Tokyo**

2-2-1 Azabudai,  
Minato ward, Tokyo, 106-0041

Tel: 03-5574-7611  
Fax: 03-5574-0195

**Website**  
www.afghanembassyjp.org



**Contact Us**

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions regarding this newsletter or the Embassy, please send an e-mail to the embassy's Public Affairs Officer, Jason Pratt:

[pratt@afghanembassyjp.org](mailto:pratt@afghanembassyjp.org)