



February
2014

Newsletter

Key findings of the recently-released Asia Foundation Afghanistan in 2013 Survey

Three quarters of Afghans give national government performance a positive assessment.

A majority say the country is moving in the right direction.

Reasons cited for the nation moving in the right direction: reconstruction, good security, improved education system, more schools for girls, active presence of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

88% are confident in the Army; 72% are confident in the Police.

Most are satisfied with the availability of drinking water and education for children. The majority are satisfied with the availability of irrigation water, clinics and hospitals, and medicine.

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Latest News



H.E. President Karzai inaugurates Agricultural University

H.E. President Hamid Karzai, joined by H.E. Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Asif Rahimi and H.E. Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid of India, on February 15th inaugurated the new Afghan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University (ANSTU) in Kandahar. This is the first agricultural university in the nation. The school's building was supported by India. In his opening remarks, H.E. President Karzai spoke on the significance of the school for the Afghanistan's future.

H.E. Mr. Zarar Ahmad Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Ambassador Hiroshi Takahashi of Japan held a signing ceremony on February 4th to officially mark the project's start.

The project calls for the expansion and renovation of such facilities as the international terminal and will install new equipment such as x-ray machines and metal detectors. The plan will also help to relieve congestion in the airport.

H.E. Minister Osmani, H.E. Ambassador Takahashi sign into action "The Project for Strengthening Security in Kabul International Airport"

A project will be undertaken to further the strong security at Kabul International Airport with the generous support of Japan.

H.E. Minister Osmani hailed Japan, commenting that the partnership "is based on friendly relations," adding, "it will be worthwhile to continue this assistance for sustainable development and pave the way for the self-empowerment of Afghanistan."

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Ambassador Takahashi stated that partnership in relation to Kabul International Airport is “a symbol of the friendship expressed by the people of Japan towards the people of Afghanistan.”

Ambassador Fatimie accompanies H.E. Minister Zakhilwal, meets H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Aso

Ambassador Dr. Sayed M. Amin Fatimie and Mr. Mohammad Yasir Karimi, Second Secretary, accompanied on February 5th H.E. Dr. Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, Minister of Finance, to a meeting with H.E. Mr. Taro Aso, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. Mr. Musa Kawami, Director of Human Resources at the Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghani-



stan, was also present.

H.E. Minister Zakhilwal and H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Aso discussed opportunities and challenges that Afghanistan will have in 2014 and beyond. It was also noted that Afghanistan has been declared to have the 4th most transparent budget system in Asia.

Ambassador Fatimie accompanies H.E. Minister Zakhilwal on meeting with H.E. Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Kishi

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Message from the Ambassador

Dr. Sayed M. Amin Fatimie



Dear friends,

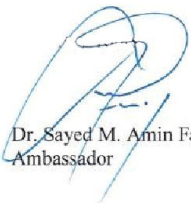
February has certainly been a busy month and for those affected by the severe snowstorms in parts of Japan, I extend my thoughts and prayers. Even in the winter, our embassy has continued to be warmed throughout our many interactions with noble Japanese people.

In February, many successes were achieved, particularly in the continuing development of our political activities and relations. I was honored to welcome to Japan H.E. Minister of Finance Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal and to accompany him on important meetings, including one with H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Aso. This visit allowed for the successful development of new avenues for further cooperation between our two countries. To the Embassy, I also had the pleasure of welcoming three distinguished guests from the Liberal Democratic Party, H.E. the Minister of Environment Mr. Ishihara, the Hon. Mr. Hirasawa, and the Hon.

Mr. Tanose. Another great pleasure was my meeting with the President of the New Komeito Party, the Hon. Mr. Yamaguchi. I was also fortunate enough to attend the DPJ's Café Democrats and to greet a number of other Honorable Parliamentarians at several other events.

Meeting such noble Japanese leaders provided valuable examples of democracy's merits as we prepare for upcoming April Presidential and Provincial Shura elections.

The chill of winter have begun to turn into the rebirth and warmth of spring. In Afghanistan, the warmer weather heralds in valleys full of blossoms which paint areas across the country in seas of pinks, reds, and white. Over the coming weeks, Japan will also once again be covered in blossoms. As Japanese and Afghans look to enjoy the blossoms, may our two countries also look upward together, toward a radiant future and enjoy the fruits of our warm and resolute relations.


Dr. Sayed M. Amin Fatimie
Ambassador



On February 5th, Ambassador Dr. Fatimie, together with Mr. Karimi, accompanied visiting H.E. Dr. Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, Minister of Finance, on a meeting with H.E. Mr. Nobuo Kishi, Senior Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Kawami was also present.

H.E. Minister Zakhilwal and H.E. Mr. Kishi spoke on the progress being made within the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, the continuing Japanese commitment to partnering with Afghanistan, and the dedication to the safety of Japanese in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Fatimie accompanies H.E. Minister Zakhilwal on meeting with President Tanaka of JICA



On February 5th, during a meeting between H.E. Dr. Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, Minister of Finance and Dr. Akihiko Tanaka, President of JICA, Ambassador Dr. Fatimie and Mr. Karimi were in accompaniment. Mr. Kawami of the Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, was also present.

During the warm conversation, H.E. the Minister expressed deepest gratitude for JICA's efforts in the Japanese cooperation in Afghanistan, which has resulted in great socio-economic strides.

The gentlemen also discussed the safety of JICA's staff in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Fatimie, Embassy warmly host H.E. Minister Ishihara, Hon. Mr. Hirasawa, Hon. Mr. Tanose, Mr. Harada



Ambassador Dr. Fatimie, supported by his staff, offered the warmest welcome on February 17th to the Embassy to H.E. Mr. Nobuteru Ishihara, Minister of the Environment and Minister of State for the Corporation in Nuclear Emergency Preparedness; Hon. Representative Katsue Hirasawa; Hon. Representative Taizo Tanose; and Mr. Dan Harada, head of Nagatacho Forum. Ambassador Dr. Fatimie has a warm and long-standing friendship with Mr. Harada who kindly helped to create the new bonds of friendship with the other esteemed visitors.

Ambassador Dr. Fatimie firstly expressed deepest appreciation for the visit despite very busy schedules. Furthermore, the Ambassador expressed deepest gratitude for the life-bettering and selfless partnership that Japan has extended to Afghanistan, stating that not only has it resulted in longer and freer Afghan lives, it has also resulted in even deeper friendship between the nations and respect for Japanese from all Afghans.

The guests and hosts shared a meal of Afghan cuisine and engaged in warm and open discussion over various issues. H.E. Minister Ishihara kindly reaffirmed Japanese commitment to continued partnership and overtures of the deepening of friendship between the guests, Ambassador Dr. Fatimie, the Embassy, and Afghanistan in general were expressed.

Ambassador Fatimie meets with Hon. President Yamaguchi of the New Komeito party



On February 21st, Ambassador Dr. Fatimie met with Hon. President Natsuo Yamaguchi of the New Komeito party. Ambassador Dr. Fatimie has had a long and friendly relationship with Hon. President Yamaguchi.

During the talks, the Ambassador was able to express anew the most heartfelt appreciation of the people and Government regarding the life-bettering partnership of Japan in Afghanistan's peace and development and for Hon. President Yamaguchi and the New Komeito's roles within. The bonds that were reaffirmed and further deepened were commemorated by a symbolic gift from the Ambassador to the Hon. President.

Ambassador Fatimie meets with H.E. Special Advisor Iijima



Also on February 21st, Ambassador Dr. Fatimie met with H.E. Mr. Isao Iijima, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister. H.E. Mr. Iijima also serves as Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary and Senior Fellow at Keidanren's 21st Century Public Policy Institute. The meeting was also attended by Ms. Ayano Tsushima from H.E. Mr. Iijima's office .

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Ambassador Dr. Fatimie took the opportunity to express deepest gratitude, on behalf of the people and Government, to H.E. Mr. Iijima for the generous and effect-generating partnership extended by Japan to Afghanistan's peace and development. H.E. Mr. Iijima kindly offered assurances of Japan's continued cooperation as well as His own personal dedication to further enhancing the already warm bilateral relations.

Ambassador Fatimie speaks to Central Asia & Caucasus Research Institute at House of Representatives



Ambassador Dr. Fatimie participated in a meeting of the Central Asia and Caucasus Research Institute at the House of Representatives on February 26th. The Ambassador was the gathering's featured speaker. He was accompanied by Mr. Karimi and Ms. Orya Afzali Farima, Second Secretary.

In the Ambassador's speech, entitled "The Future of Afghanistan and Japan's Role," he spoke about Afghanistan's development and Japan's contributions, future goals and expectations, and potential for further, mutually beneficial partnership.

The event, organized by Mr. Tetsuji

Tanaka, was attended by prominent individuals, including H.E. Senior Vice-Minister of Justice Shinsuke Okuno, Hon. Representative Asahiko Mihara, who delivered opening remarks; Hon. Representative Hisayuki Fujii; Hon. Representative Sachiko Kanno; Hon. Representative Toru Shiraiishi; Hon. Representative Shusuke Mutai; Hon. Representative Shinsuke Takei; Hon. Representative Akira Sato; Hon. Representative Takahiro Inoue; Hon. Representative Karen Maki-shima; Hon. Councillor Inoguchi; and First Secretary Alexander V. Kolchin of the Embassy of the Russian Federation; amongst others.

Mobile library opened

The latest move in bringing education to all was the opening of mobile children's library on February 16th. The library holds some 15000 books, with the support of the Asia Foundation. The mobile library will be in Nangarhar province for 4 months and then move elsewhere.

Afghanistan to be WTO member

Afghanistan has finalized steps to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Actual membership will begin at a later date. Afghanistan will enjoy lower tariffs and export duties for goods in member nations.

Herat International Airport to be upgraded

Herat International Airport will be upgraded with support from Italy.

An agreement was signed on February 11th. The airport will receive such features as a state-of-the-art control tower and an additional terminal and runway. Completion is scheduled for 2017.

Currently, roughly 350,000 persons travel through Herat International Airport yearly. The upgrade will solidify it as a major international hub by allowing connection to more destinations worldwide; the UAE, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia have been mentioned as possibilities. Estimates say passengers could triple in volume. Herat International will likely become the nation's largest airport in terms of cargo.

Development to proceed in Herat area

Construction will proceed on the Herat Ring Road and the Chesht-Herat highway with the support of Italy. Both are scheduled for a 2017 completion.

Afghanistan Cricket Board awarded by ICC

The Asian Cricket Council awarded the Afghanistan Cricket Board in 2 categories at the Pepsi ICC Development Program Annual Awards: Best Overall Cricket Development Program and Best Junior Participation Initiative.

"The Best Overall Cricket Development Program Award recognizes excellence in governance, management, cricket operations and participation ... The Best Junior Participation Initiative Award recognizes the ACB's development of School Cricket in Afghanistan in collaboration with the Ministry of Education," according to Wadsam.