



Afghan News

Highlighted Achievements

- Roughly 4,000 school buildings constructed or rehabilitated
- 3 million people have benefited from rural water and sanitation projects
- 20 of 34 provinces have been declared poppy-free (2009) – two more than last year
- Roughly 8 million unexploded ordnances have been cleared

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Latest News

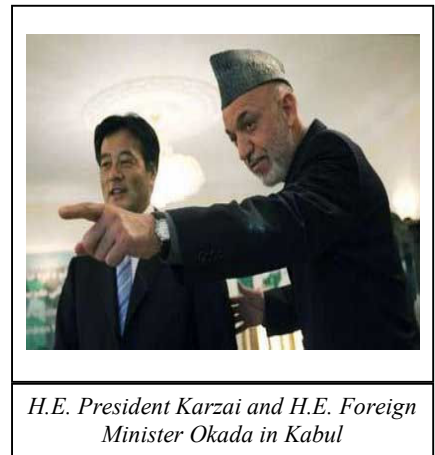
H.E. President Hamid Karzai's welcomes Japanese Foreign Minister

On October 11th Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada paid a visit to Afghanistan and met with H.E. President Karzai and H.E. Foreign Minister Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, expressing a desire to strengthen aid to the people. "The Japanese government wants to extend aid that is helpful to Afghanistan," Okada told reporters. "With empathy as fellow human beings, we want to help the Afghans reconstruct their country." Minister Okada stated that reconstruction support is an important subject for the Japanese government. After the meeting, Minister Okada visited a vocational training center in Kabul, which was built with a grant from Japan. Okada stated that upon his return to Japan, he plans to quickly study ways to expand support in such fields as vocational training and agriculture.

Since 2002, Japan has provided aid totaling 1.79 billion dollars. Foreign Ministry officials are participating in a Provincial Reconstruction Team, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency has dispatched technical specialists.

H.E. President Hamid Karzai meets with Japanese House of Councilors Representatives

On October 9th, President Hamid Karzai met with a delegation representing the Japanese House of Councilors, led by Tadahashi Inuzuka. Mr. Inuzuka assured President Karzai of his country's continuous support for Afghanistan. President Karzai



H.E. President Karzai and H.E. Foreign Minister Okada in Kabul

thanked the government and the people of Japan for the assistance they provide and stressed the importance of the expansion of bilateral relations.

Ministry of Communication and IT (MCIT) Inaugurated First Ever National Data Center - ANDC

The Ministry of Communication and IT (MCIT) and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have now achieved yet another historical mission – the establishment of the Afghanistan National Data Center (ANDC).

The data center is an important cornerstone in the evolution of various national technological advancements and it will contribute to the economic and social development, creating a competitive, innovative, and knowledge-based soci-

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ety. The Ministry of Communication and IT (MCIT) has invested a total of US\$4.7 million to establish a highly competitive and efficient Data Center in alignment with the country's needs in adaptation of new trends and latest technological standards for the business and service sectors. The Data Center resources and services will be accessible across and outside Afghanistan through the Internet, Government Communication Network (GCN) and Fiber Optic ring laid around the country.

UN launches \$4b development plan

The United Nations will launch its US\$4 billion development plan at a ceremony to be held October 24th. The ceremony will be marked with the launch of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The key document entailing the development assistance from 2010 to 2013 was prepared by 28 UN agencies in cooperation with the government. UNDAF supports the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and focuses on three priority areas: governance, peace, and stability. The emphasis is on human resources development, capacity building, agriculture and access to income. The strategy targets rural communities and aims at building marketable skills through vocational training programmes in the health and education sectors.



Ambassador Hakimi met with Mr. Yoshitake Kimata of the House of Councillors and members from Sekai Kyusei Kyo.

Four schools constructed in Logar

For school buildings have been handed over to officials in Muhammad Agha district of the central Logar province during the previous month with plans for reconstruction. Plans for the newly constructed buildings include intentions of a more innovative and educational environment as well as a safer place of study for the students.

The newly reconstructed buildings will include the Shaheed Shahsawar Girls' Middle School, Malalai Higher Secondary School for Girls, and Deh Naw and Mughal Khel Higher Secondary Schools. A statement from the Education Ministry explained that the Shaheed Shahsawar School (a single-story building with six classrooms and two administrative rooms) and the double-story Malalai School are now under reconstruction. According to Education Director Kamaluddin Zadran: the province currently has 219 schools but 109 of them have no proper buildings. The new construction plans of the four schools are only seen as the beginning of the redevelopment for the educational facilities.

Quota for higher education up by 20%

Minister for Higher Education Muhammad Azam Dadfar has stated that 20% more students should be admitted to higher education institutes in 2010, with the number of students admitted increasing every year. Around 18,000 students have been admitted to different institutes of higher education already. The Ministry of Higher Education has thus far reconstructed six buildings for different institutions during 2009 in attempts of providing better and more functional facilities.

As the education system looks to improve in such areas as facilities, faculty, and student safety, H.E. Minister Dadfar revealed that two separate departments would be es-

tablished in Kunar province next year to specifically address these issues. Three programs have already been launched to produce more qualified teachers for the schools. This initiative also includes a number of teachers being sent abroad to get masters and doctorate degrees.

Policewomen graduate from intelligence course

Nineteen female police officers have graduated from an intensive intelligence course this past month. "It was the first time that women will be attending this week-long course focusing on the police role in the community, pattern analysis, as well as interior intelligence" said an official of the Interior Ministry. The police officers, selected from local police districts, will apply new knowledge from their training while contributing to the protection and safety of society. Today, the Interior Ministry has some 750 female officers in active duty around the nation.



Dozens of midwives graduate

Minister for Public Health Dr. Sayed Muhammad Amin Fatimie awarded graduation certificates to 31 midwives at a ceremony in Shiberghan on October 18th. Jawzjan Health Director Dr. Abdul Sattar Paigham explained that the midwives completed 18 months of training financed by the USAID. 16 midwives were from Jawzjan and 15 from Faryab; they will be employed in provincial capitals and 10 districts of the two

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provinces. Dr. Fatimie says that the graduation of midwives in Jawzjan will lead to a decrease in child and mother mortality in the north.

The minister revealed Jawzjan was one of Afghanistan's seven provinces which will be fully equipped with medical facilities by 2014. The ministry will establish a health services foundation in five years.

Health center being constructed in Daman

The foundation stone of a health clinic has been laid in the Azam Kala area of Daman district in southern Kandahar province. Governor Toryalay Wissa, Daman district chief Haji Siraj Ahmad, and Health Director Dr. Abdul Qayyum Pukhla were among those present at the foundation stone-laying ceremony. The clinic is planned to be constructed in seven months and will provide health services including internal medicine, immunization, gynecology, and obstetrics for 30,000 people living in nearby areas. The construction work on an additional 10 health centers is also underway in Kandahar province.

Tourism Development

During the 1960s and 1970s, Afghanistan was a destination for foreign visitors ranging from archaeologists and ethnographers to Western youth looking for adventure. Today the tourists have started returning and the Bamiyan central highlands draw thousands of domestic tourists annually (as well as foreigners living and working locally). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recently added the Bamiyan Valley to UNESCO's List of World Heritages in Danger in 2003.

Despite the unfortunate destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001 at the hands of the Taliban, tourists continue to be attracted to the site's remaining cultural riches and ancient ruins. Some attractions also include the nearby Band-e Amir, a series of deep blue lakes that became the cen-



terpiece of the first national park earlier this year. The park is home to the ibex goat, urial sheep, and the Afghan snow finch, the only known bird found exclusively in Afghanistan.

The nonprofit Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is implementing a program to help local people welcome foreign visitors back. The Bamiyan Ecotourism Program, funded by the government of New Zealand, just recently launched this year. It includes brochure and website creating workshops, as well as training for local guides. Training will also include the establishment of private guesthouses and quality upgrade in terms of services at hotels and restaurants. A tourist information office has also been established in hopes of rekindling tourism.

Besides Bamiyan, AKDN runs a similar eco-tourism program in the remote, peaceful northeastern Wakhan Corridor, sandwiched between Pakistan, China, and Tajikistan. Adventurous travelers can explore the valley of the upper Amu Darya River, surrounded by some of the highest mountains of the Hindu Kush. By vehicle, by horse, by yak, or by foot, tourists and explorers can camp in yurts in the high summer pastures of Kyrgyz nomads, making it a real wildlife adventure.

Virtual Museum of Afghan Civilization taking shape

A virtual museum reflecting the rich cultural heritage of Afghanistan is taking shape, courtesy of the

world-renowned French-Hungarian artist Yona Friedman. He presented his design for the new virtual Museum of Afghan Civilization on October 15th at the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York.

A global showcase which is also in the making, will celebrate the ancient culture of Afghanistan at afghanculturemuseum.org, which will be the world's first online museum dedicated to all cultures that have flourished in Afghanistan. Likely to become live in early 2010, it is the brainchild of a Paris-based independent association, which believes Afghans deserve a state-of-the-art institution to preserve our history and civilization. When complete, it will feature a wealth of information, contextualized in four languages (Dari, Pashto, English, and French), about a wide range of cultural artifacts, from photos and etchings to art forms such as music, dance, poetry, and literature.

The museum will not only feature existing works of art, but also include many that have unfortunately been destroyed or been lost. Within this virtual structure, a team of leading experts will assemble, explain and highlight a dazzling, encyclopedic display of 5,000 years of cultural treasures. Now literally scattered across the globe, these treasures will be brought back together for the first time to celebrate the enduring heritage of the Afghan people.

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Photo expedition opens in Herat

An exhibition showcasing more than 75 striking photographs of Afghan people and places by American photographer Steve McCurry has opened in Herat. The exhibition, called "In the Shadow of the Mountains," depicts children, families, shepherds, laborers, and landscapes taken over the course of 27 years. The exhibition was born from the ideal that positive representations were important in order to counterbalance the harsh images frequently displayed today. Educational Support Organization is training local guides to provide educational programs for around 3,000 schoolchildren.

Many of McCurry's images have become world renowned, including a cover photo for National Geographic displaying a young girl at Nasir Bagh refugee camp.

Interview with Gianni Giosue

Japan-based Italian freelance photo-journalist Gianni Giosue has been known in many circles for his excellent photographs from around Japan, but he has also visited many other locations around the world. A long time friend of Afghanistan, Gianni speaks about his trips there.



Q: How did you become interested in Afghanistan?

I had been fascinated with Afghani-

stan ever since I saw pictures of the country taken during the Taliban regime. It appeared to me like a mysterious and attractive place to be. I was also intrigued by the faces of the people in the photos, blonde hair and blue or green eyes, which did not go together with my idea of what people usually look like in that part of the world. They are a beautiful and equally generous people.

I keep going back because I want to learn more about Afghanistan and its people. I also really respect them for their pride. We are speaking of people who went through 30 years of conflict and even so their spirit has not been affected. They are incredibly welcoming, gentle and proud. Every time I am invited into their homes I feel completely safe and amongst friends.

Q: This is your second trip to Afghanistan, what has been your inspiration for each of the trips?

For my first trip I did not know what to expect, so I was there to learn how to become more mobile and self-reliant. I also wanted to see with my own eyes what Afghanistan truly is. Before my departure, I did a lot of research, but doing research was not enough until I actually went there. After my experience there, I wanted to continually explore and travel to Afghanistan for years to come.

Unfortunately after the events of September 11th I had to change my plans and wait for the right time. In 2008 I became tired of waiting so I decided to make the trip to Afghanistan within that year. It was a trip for personal experience and was completely self-financed.

For my second trip I wanted to be there during the Presidential elections.

The Presidential election is a historical period for Afghanistan. A lot of things have rapidly changed

in recent years especially in Kabul, and I wanted to be there to experience this transition period.

Q: Did you have any specific goals for this second trip?

For my second trip I wanted to get under the surface of Afghanistan and become more acquainted with the people. I was interested in seeing how people with different cultures and ethnicities live in the country and in addition I also wanted to explore and record different glimpses of their home lives to show to the outside world. My aim was to show and demonstrate that Afghan people are not so different from us. We all share the same ideals of peace and the want of a good life.

Q: Have you experienced anything fascinating or made any interesting discoveries while traveling in Afghanistan?

I love walking around Kabul and discovering places which I had seen in photographs. I love walking up to Bibi Mahru Hill and taking a look at the Olympic size swimming pool which was built by the Soviets. Imagine this- *a huge swimming pool with diving platforms, on top of a flat hill, surrounded by the city.*

There is something magical about that place. I usually go up early in the morning or late in the afternoon to soak in the best light and interact with the people. In the summer you can see children arriving to fetch water and to take a dip. The cool shade and location make it all the more a wonderful place.

I am also amazed by the diversity of the ethnic groups in Afghanistan; Tajiks, Uzbeks, Arabs, Hazaras, Pashtuns, Nouristani and several others who inhabit that wonderful area of Afghanistan called the Wakhan



<http://sankei-express.iza.ne.jp/blog/entry/1161627/>

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Upcoming Events & Important

December 10-16: "Afghan ni Midori no Daichi wo" photo exhibition

Photographs from Kazuya Ito, the brave Japanese man who dedicated himself to helping Afghanistan's agricultural sector, will be shown in his memory in Shibuya at the Mont Belle Shibuya Building (8 minutes from Shibuya station).

November 2-December 19 Photo exhibition with Photographer Mr. Nagakura Hiromi

Renowned Japanese photographer Hiromi Nagakura will present and talk about his photos from the exhibition 'Silk Road—the human figure.'

The gallery will be open only on weekdays and Saturdays between 10am and 5:30pm; it will be closed on Sundays and holidays.

The conference will take place in Canon Hall S, 3rd floor of Canon S Tower from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm on November 28th. The venue holds up to 300 people. Reservations are needed. For more information and reservation, please log on to canon.jp/event.

The photographer will also have Gallery talks on November 6th, 13th, 21st and December 5th, 11th, 12th and 19th from 1.30 pm each day in Canon Gallery S. For more information, call. 03-6719-9021

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corridor and Badakhsan province (which could be the destinations of my next trip to Afghanistan).

Q : Have your opinions changed through the involvement with Afghanistan?

No, I still love the country. I know more about the country and I can better understand what is going on.

Q: What are your Japanese friends' opinions of you being interested in Afghanistan and traveling to the country? Have their opinions changed?

Most of my Japanese friends know that I like traveling and that I am interested in the many different cultures of the world. They are just mainly worried about my choice of destination.

When they came to my photo Exhibition at the Foreign Correspondents' Club they were greeted with photos that were different from the ones they normally see on mainstream media. They were in fact surprised to realize that there are many underlying circumstances and situations they were not aware of. As always, people who are eager to understand and learn can discover

something new.

Q: Do you have any message for the Japanese people?

Find out more about this fascinating area of the world called Central Asia. It is truly an inspiring and beautiful place! Try to become acquainted with the people from Afghanistan and experience their generosity and politeness. I am sure you will start to feel attracted by this mysterious place and you will better understand why I keep going back.

To learn about Gianni's exhibition:
<http://www.fccj.or.jp/node/4510>

To see more of Gianni's photos:
<http://www.gaia-photos.com/afghanistan-circus-for-children/>

Also published in various magazines including:

Shukan Asahi- Life is colorful (May 2009)
http://publications.asahi.com/ecs/detail/?item_id=10404

Jica's World - Jica's Official Magazine (September 2009)
<http://www.jica.go.jp/publication/j-world/0909/pdf/09.pdf>

Sankei Express (August 2009)



Omar's Kitchen

Each month, the Embassy's Chef, Omar, will offer a recipe for authentic Afghan food.

Kishtah Chalow (Dried apricot rice)

Ingredients (for 3 people):

- 1/4 Ib. (1 stick) Unsalted butter
- 1 lg. Onion chopped coarsely
- 3 Chicken breasts cut into chunks
- 6 oz. Dried unsulfured apricots (soaked overnight)
- 4 Tbsp. Golden Sultanas (raisins)
- 2 Tbsp. Ground cinnamon sticks
- 10 oz. Long grain brown rice
- 22 oz. Boiling water
- 1/2 tsp. Salt
- 3 Tbsp. Vegetable oil
- 3 oz. Water
- Salt and pepper for taste (optional)

To cook:

Soak rice in a bowl of water for 3 hours.

In a saucepan, melt the butter and sauté the onion until golden. Add the chicken chunks and brown gently. Then add the apricots, raisins, cinnamon, salt and pepper to taste, and sauté for 10 minutes covered. Put the apricot juice into the pot with enough water to cover the chicken, and bring to a boil together with the apricots. Cover, stir, and simmer until the chicken is very tender and the sauce thick. (Approx. 45 minutes.)

While the chicken is cooking, wash and drain the soaking rice. In a pot with a tight-fitting lid, bring 22 oz. of water to a boil with a half-teaspoon of salt. Add the rice, bring it to a second boil, and cover with the lid wrapped in a dish towel and simmer on the lowest possible heat.

The rice should steam for 30-45 minutes.

Put the rice on a platter with the KISHTAH in the middle.



Language Lesson

There are many languages spoken in Afghanistan, but two are designated as the nation's official languages: Pashto and Dari. For audio samples of the vocabulary and phrases, please go to:

<http://www.afghanembassyjp.org/en/life/?pn=203>

| English | Pashto | Dari |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1:00 | You | Yak |
| 2:00 | Dowa | Dow |
| 3:00 | Dree | Sai |
| 4:00 | Shalour | Chakar |
| 5:00 | Pinza | Panch |
| 6:00 | Spag | Shash |
| 7:00 | Wa | Haft |
| 8:00 | Ata | Hasht |
| 9:00 | Naha | No |
| 10:00 | Las | Dah |
| 11:00 | Youlas | Yazdah |
| 12:00 | Dowlas | Dowadah |
| Conversation | | |
| Excuse me. | Oobakhe. | Bubakhshed. |
| Yes? | Awo? | Baley? |
| Do you know what time it is? | Sahat sho dai? | Sahat chand ast? |
| It is 3:00. | Aous dree baj dai. | Sahat sai ast. |
| Thank you. | Manana. | Tashakur. |

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