

# Afghanistan national day

## Bilateral unity apparent on many levels

Sayed M. Amin Fatimine  
AMBASSADOR OF AFGHANISTAN

Today, on Aug. 19 we mark the National Day of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I would like to take this special opportunity to therefore, on behalf of my people and government, extend my warmest greetings and gratitude to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and to the government and people of Japan for the unwavering friendship and partnership they have extended.

Dear friends, while some hold the misconception that our two nations are distant, we are in fact quite close by many measurements. Geographically, we border a common nation, making us the neighbors of a neighbor. Historically, trade and travel along the Silk Road resulted in our peoples handling the same goods, sharing ideas and exhibiting similar cultural traits. Diplomatically, we have been tied for more than 80 years. In terms of friendship, brotherhood and sisterhood, we have always exhibited a readiness to stand together in times of need. This last facet has been exhibited through Japan's solidarity with us since our liberation in December of 2001, including in the aftermath of this year's tragic mudslides in Badakhshan province.

Your distinguished nation's impactful touch in Afghanistan is readily visible in the development that we have been experiencing, in the peace that continues to spread, and in the smiles of our people, who live better, longer and more fulfilling lives. We are forever grateful for the cooperation and support that has been extended by the government and people of Japan. Truly, this partnership has been a clear and radiant symbol of our warm relations.

As we place the highest-level value on our nations' friendship, our government and our embassy in Tokyo constantly strive to strengthen our bonds even further. The past twelve months have fortunately been filled with many opportunities to do so. In particular, I had the

distinct honor of meeting Their Majesties the Imperial Couple multiple times, including at a luncheon in June and at formal spring and New Year's events. Furthermore, I was fortuitous enough to be able to interact with H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at an Iftar event where we joined in the breaking of the fast during the holy month of Ramadan, as well as on other occasions. Key representatives of our government, including H.E. Minister of Finance Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal and H.E. Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Ershad Ahmadi, also visited Japan in this period, reinforcing important relationships. Through events such as the Afghan Kite Festival in March we were moreover able to share cultural experiences with the Japanese public. We feel all of these activities have inspired an even deeper connectivity and mutual appreciation.

Dear friends, Afghanistan and Japan are indeed naturally close. In addition to the binding factors already mentioned, we possess common core values between our nations, namely resilience, hospitality, strength of character, love of peace and now democracy, among others.

While democracy is still young in our nation, it has been embraced fully by Afghans. This has been clearly shown in our high voter turnouts. The latest example is readily found in the approximately eight million people, 38 percent of them being women, who cast their votes in the second round of our presidential election. The process has been a success so far as the Asia Foundation's 2013 survey provides proof, noting that 75 percent of those surveyed gave the government positive reviews. The people are eager to use their voices to ensure our progress continues to move forward. We can guarantee that in the future, Japan will remain in the hearts of our people and an invaluable partner for our new administration.

For these reasons, as we celebrate our National Day, it is a good opportunity to simultaneously celebrate the eternal friendship between our nations and our great peoples. I wholeheartedly thank you for joining me in doing so.



Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai meets with Emperor Akihito at the Imperial Palace on July 10 after attending the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan. EMBASSY OF AFGHANISTAN



Afghanistan Ambassador Sayed M. Amin Fatimine speaks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at an Iftar reception hosted by Abe in Tokyo on July 13. EMBASSY OF AFGHANISTAN

## Growing friendship between nations

Natsuo Yamaguchi  
PRESIDENT, NEW KOMIITO

I would like to extend my congratulations to the government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on their national day.

In my career, I have been keen to consider Japan's role in promoting peace throughout Asia and the world. In 2004, I was able to witness firsthand our nation's coop-

eration with Afghanistan toward that end when I visited the site of demining activities. Now, 10 years later, I am encouraged that the pursuit of lasting peace is still firmly entrenched in Afghanistan. We clearly saw the evidence of this through the high voter turnout in this year's elections. As we continue to deepen the already long and warm friendship between our nations, I look forward to realizing our potential to together inspire even greater regional and international peace.

Once again, let me congratulate you.



### Congratulations on the 95th Anniversary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Independence

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