

Afghanistan National Day Special

Friendship nurtures sustainability, positivity

BASHIR MOHABBAT
AMBASSADOR OF AFGHANISTAN



I am honored on this, the 101st Anniversary of the Restoration of Independence of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, to convey, on behalf of my nation, warm greetings to their imperial majesties the emperor and empress of Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the people and government of Japan.

Much has happened since I last had the honor of publishing a national day piece. In 2019, Afghans and Japanese alike experienced great happiness and bitter sadness. The historical transition from the Heisei Era to the Reiwa Era brought about great joy and hope, not just in Japan, but across the world. It was thus an immeasurable honor to have our elected leader, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, welcomed as a

witness to the enthronement of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Naruhito.

Last year also wrought unbearable sadness when Dr. Tetsu Nakamura was taken from the world by the enemies of peace. Nakamura was dedicated to bringing health to the people of Afghanistan. A visionary, he believed that he was not limited to the provision of medicine. Against massive odds, he spearheaded a project that transformed barren desert into lush lands. His kindness and selflessness earned him the peerless respect of our people and our government. While the angst in our hearts will forever remain, so too will the legacy of this amazing man. This past year has been dedicated to his memory and we will always hold his teachings dear.

This year, too, has been marked by challenges. Nonetheless, as the world collectively works to overcome these, we also mark important occasions and developments. November 2020 marks the 90th anniversary of the signing of the Afghan-Japanese treaty of friendship. In

1930, representatives of our countries met in London to sign a document that would foreshadow an invaluable legacy of friendship and generations of mutual support. Japan has proven itself over the following decades to be a precious ally. Despite the great efforts Japan continues to take to meet domestic challenges associated with the coronavirus pandemic, Japan has dedicated \$8.7 million to Afghanistan's endeavors to address the situation. This generosity is indicative of the hopes penned in 1930.

Japan's friendship and support is directly linked to the gains that we continue to make in Afghanistan. Despite the challenges of the past year, we have positive news to share. Our democracy continues to empower our people. Our presidential election process concluded earlier this year with Ghani being elected to a second term. We also continue to make gains toward realizing an inclusive and lasting peace with all of those who remain in opposition. The key to success lies in the process being Afghan-led and Afghan-owned, but the

support of our international allies within this context will be eternally appreciated. Toward such a positive outcome, negotiations with resistance groups continue, and we are optimistic that progress will accelerate.

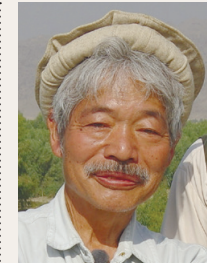
Though the global economy remains precarious, our agricultural sector is booming more than ever; exports to some of the world's largest markets, such as China and India, have increased. All of the aforementioned success stories are connected to some degree with projects that Japan has partnered with us on in the past or continues to assist us with today.

We will continue our positive momentum in the near future. The Geneva ministerial conference on Afghanistan will be organized by the Republic of Finland together with the government of Afghanistan and the United Nations later this year. Afghanistan will present on the progress it has made with respect to fulfilling the commitments made at the Brussels Conference in 2016, based on which international donors are expected

Long-time hopes for improving livelihoods

The following article, provided by the Embassy of Afghanistan, was the last that Dr. Tetsu Nakamura wrote for the newsletter of his foundation, Peshawar-kai. When the organization was approached about providing a message in recognition of Afghanistan's National Day, the current head suggested that this message be used. Therefore, this piece will serve as a reminder of the wonderful visionary, Nakamura.

I received honorary Afghan citizenship directly from His Excellency President of Afghanistan Mohammad Ashraf Ghani. This status allows us in Peshawar-kai (Peace Japan Medical Services, PMS) to engage in more projects with the locals. I truly believe that we achieved this honor because of the heartfelt long-term support and cooperation of Japan, local



Afghan colleagues and local leaders.

At the same time, the irrigation projects, which we have invested great efforts in, proved to be vital for improving the livelihood of the people of

Afghanistan. Since Afghanistan is one of the countries hardest hit by global warming, the arable lands continue to dry up as a result of drought, which exposes the people to desperate hunger. Nonetheless, in this desperate situation, it is our desire that the PMS efforts bring hope to the people and help the revitalization of lands severely hit by years of drought.

to pledge support to Afghanistan for the next four years. The upcoming Geneva conference will mark another milestone in our common journey that we have traveled together since 2001 and the government of Afghanistan, as always, counts

on Japan's support.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on Oct. 23 in Tokyo SOURCE: OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN AND HIS CABINET ([HTTPS://WWW.KANTEI.GO.JP/JP/98_ABE/ACTIONS/201910/23KAIDAN_06.HTML](https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/98_abe/actions/201910/23KAIDAN_06.html))



President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani (left front) carries the coffin of Dr. Tetsu Nakamura on Dec. 7 at Kabul Airport. EMBASSY OF AFGHANISTAN

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浜崎工業株式会社
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PIPING DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
STEEL STRUCTURE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Head Office

3-38 Senrakudori, Minami-ku, Nagoya 457-0852 Japan
Tel: +81 (52) 691-6939 Fax: +81 (52) 692-4970

Kanto Office

5-11-9-6F Higashi Oi, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0011 Japan
Tel: +81 (3) 6433-0907 Fax: +81 (3) 3471-6755

Kansai Office

3-3-16-202 Kawaramachi, Chuo-ku, Osaka 541-0048 Japan
Tel: +81 (6) 6226-8649 Fax: +81 (6) 6226-8659

Nagashima Office

141 Urayasu, Nagashima-cho, Kuwana 511-1135 Japan
Tel: +81 (594) 45-0955 Fax: +81 (594) 45-0920

<http://www.hamasaki-kougyo.co.jp/>

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TEL 81-561-72-0356 FAX 81-561-73-1197(sales) FAX 81-561-73-1159(Design)