Feature Story
“The Golden Hill: Tillya Tepe”

Afghanistan’s hidden gold treasure, the Tillya Tepe (Golden Hill) was found in Sheberghan City, Jowzjan, but went missing for years before another sudden discovery of the artifacts in 1979... (p.3)
Jowzjan province is one of the most important locations in northern Afghanistan due to its border with Turkmenistan. It has a total population of about 512,100 people, almost one-third of which resides in the capital city of Sheberghan.

The area is also known to be abundant with gas and natural resources yet remain untouched until today. In order to safeguard these resources, the Afghan Ministry of Mines have introduced strict measures to prevent illicit exploitation, one of them was the Afghanistan Hydrocarbons Law in 2007.

- Jowzjan province has immense gas reserves
- Sand, lime, gypsum, and natural gas are abundant in the region
- There are 5 known areas with rich natural gas reservoirs
- There are 8 gas wells in the outskirts of Jerqoduq, Yatim Taq, and the areas of Sheberghan City
- Each well produces 260,000 cubic meters of gas in a day
- 300 gas wells were certified by Russian and Afghan experts in 1960.
Afghanistan’s hidden gold treasure, also known as The Bactrian Gold of the Tillya Tepe (Golden Hill), was found in Sheberghan City, Jowzjan, by a Soviet-Afghan team led by the Greek-Russian archaeologist Viktor Sarianidi. At least 21,000 pieces of gold in six different chambers were discovered. The treasures include accessories such as a queen’s crown, gold belt, and miniature figurines of animals. It was estimated to date back to the 1st Century BCE and was found on five women and one man.

The Bactrian Gold went missing for several years after it was first displayed in the Afghanistan’s National Museum in Kabul in 1979. In 2003, the treasure was re-discovered and brought back to the public eye. The treasure is now considered to be one of Afghanistan’s most prominent representatives of the country’s cultural heritage. Yet, amongst the treasures were also some Chinese artifacts which seems to be the remaining of a strong cultural influences in the Bactria area at the time.

The journey of the hidden treasure did not stop at Kabul. In 2015, The Bactrian Gold and hundreds of other relics from Tapa-e-Fulol, Tila Tapa, Aie-Khanum, and Bagram were put on display at the Exhibition of the Hidden Treasures in Fukuoka, Japan. In the following year, the collections were once again exhibited at the Tokyo National Museum, giving a glimpse into the life and culture of ancient Afghanistan. Cultural properties, such as The Bactrian Gold, are proofs that “A nation stays alive when its culture stays alive.”
Afghan-Japan Relations

- July 12th, 2018: On behalf of the people and Government of Afghanistan, His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Bashir Mohabbat wrote a short poem (?) for the Chunichi Newspaper. The poem, entitled Haiku of Peace, harbored the most genuine of the Ambassador’s thoughts and feelings about the constant struggle between Peace and War in Afghanistan.

- August 6th, 2018: Dr. Mohabbat attended the 73rd A-Bomb Anniversary in Hiroshima where he had the pleasure of meeting the Honorable Mayor of Hiroshima Mr. Kazumi Matsui. In light of the recent loss of many Hiroshima citizens due to extreme floods and landslides, the Ambassador expressed his deepest condolences and sympathies to the Honorable Mayor and the victims’ loved ones and wished that Hiroshima would find the inner strength to overcome the difficult times.

- August 29th, 2018: The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in Japan, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Embassy of Afghanistan in Japan co-hosted the grand signing ceremony of the Implementation Phase of the Promoting Maternal and Child Health Handbook (MCH). In this beginning phase, copies of the MCH will be distributed widely in Afghanistan to provide aid and instructions for millions of families.

- September 11th, 2018: The Embassy of Afghanistan in Japan hosted a luncheon reception for the 45 scholars graduated from the PEACE and MEXT Scholarship Programs. All of the graduates and scholars were honored for having been successfully completed their Master’s and Doctoral study in Japan.

- September 29th, 2018: The Embassy of Afghanistan in Japan participated in the 2018 Global Festa hosted by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), JICA, and Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) at the Odaiba Center Promenade. This year, the Embassy hosted a cultural booth to showcase many diverse aspects of Afghan culture to the citizens of Japan.

TRADE

In September, it was announced that Afghanistan’s exports have risen by 32%. Numerous factors contributed to such a sharp increase, including the government’s strong support for local businesses and inward investments to generate surplus of domestic supplies for exporting. Other propellers have been the implementation of National Exports Strategy and the establishments of air corridors and trade routes with China, Kazakhstan, India, and Uzbekistan. To further explore potential markets, the Made in Afghanistan: Nature’s Best exhibition was held in New Delhi in July. In September, the second annual Passage to Prosperity: India-Afghanistan International Trade and Investment Show was also hosted in Mumbai. More than 2000 Afghan, India, and international businesses participated in showcasing the best of Afghan products, services, and business opportunities in a vast array of industries. The show was a success as over 100 deals and 600 memorandums were confirmed. The Afghanistan Ministry of Commerce and Industry affirmed that boosting the country’s economic growth, especially the private sector, would continue being one of the highest priorities in the next few decades.

SECURITY

Thanks to the benevolent assistance of the international community, the security situation in Afghanistan has improved immensely throughout the country. Police services, having been provided with adequate resources, on-the-job training, and infrastructure, are becoming an efficient and reliable force safeguarding the well-being of Afghan citizens. Since 2009, the Government of Afghanistan, supported by the United Nations Development Programme, have also initiated efforts to enhance the interaction between local communities and police officers to establish strong ties and trust. The government acknowledged that a sense of community between actors of civil society, particularly the armed forces and citizens, is exactly the human capital that would ensure a progressive and developed nation.
“It is important to have voices at an international level of men and women for the future of Afghan policy. It is like a bird with no wings. If a bird has one wing, how does it fly?”

Farida Azizi is one of the most prominent Afghan advocates for women’s rights. Ms. Azizi’s stories have been shared on news outlets such as CNN, The Washington Post, and many others. Her never ending passion and dedication to empowering Afghan women had earned her the opportunity to consult Hilary Clinton and George W. Bush on women’s role in rebuilding Afghanistan. Ms. Azizi is also a coordinator of Zeba Magazine and co-founder of the Cooperation for Peace and Unity. The organization is dedicated to developing peace-making capabilities at the grassroots level. Beyond her many involvements with organizations working to achieve peace and women’s rights, Ms. Azizi is also the subject of a documentary play entitled Seven. Seven, first performed in 2008, was written by seven female playwrights based on the real stories of seven female women’s rights activists.

Mohammad Asif Mirdad
Current PEACE Scholar

During his time in Japan, Mr. Mirdad found Japanese social behavior, punctuality, and honesty extremely remarkable. He mentioned, “The most remarkable aspect in Japanese culture is that every person takes part in cleaning after themselves. Whereas, in Afghanistan, there are janitors to clean after people.”

This month’s exemplary PEACE Scholar is from the province of Ghazni. Mr. Mirdad is an associate professor at the Chemistry Department in Baghlan University, Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). He completed his first PhD course in March 2017, and now he is finishing his second year of the PhD course.

Mr. Mirdad’s studied the drying and material separating method for various biomass of agricultural products by the use of microwave technology. He focused his research on biomass on extracting, distilling, and divide the seeds of the vegetables and plants by applying new green technology (microwave irradiation). The green technology is to prevent damaging millions of vegetables and fruits. He hopes to use this new green technology to stop disaster from happening.
Afghan Recipes

Saffron Lemonade

Ingredients
- 5ml of Saffron threads
- 750ml of hot water
- 3 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 4 tablespoons of honey
- 5 pods of cardamom

Method
- In small stock pot, bring the water to a full boil. Set aside.
- Heat the saffron in a plate over boiling water for five minutes.
- Combine the lemon juice, honey and cardamom pods along with saffron-water mixture in a deep bowl and mix well.
- Garnish with the remaining saffron threads, stir well, and enjoy it!

Upcoming Events

11/3
International Friendship Festival in Tachikawa’s Showa Kinen Park

11/7
99th Celebration of the National Day Reception for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

11/28
UNITAR Women Leadership of Afghanistan Reception

12/3
Symposium: Fifteen Years Anniversary of Shanti Volunteer Association’s Afghanistan Office at JICA’s Tokyo Center

*H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mohabbat to give remarks at the event

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