

Qatar National Day

Committed to cooperation in bolstering relationship

Yousef Mohamed Bilal
AMBASSADOR OF THE STATE OF
QATAR

Dec. 18th marks the National Day of the State of Qatar, when all Qataris back home and abroad rightfully celebrate the foundation of our nation in 1878 by the leader, the father and founder of the country Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani.

Qatar national day embodies the ideals and visionary aspirations on which Qatar was founded and pays homage to the great men and women who participated in building our nation. It is also a day of reckoning and self-assessment to reflect, with all reverence and pride, the great accomplishments that have been achieved over the past years.

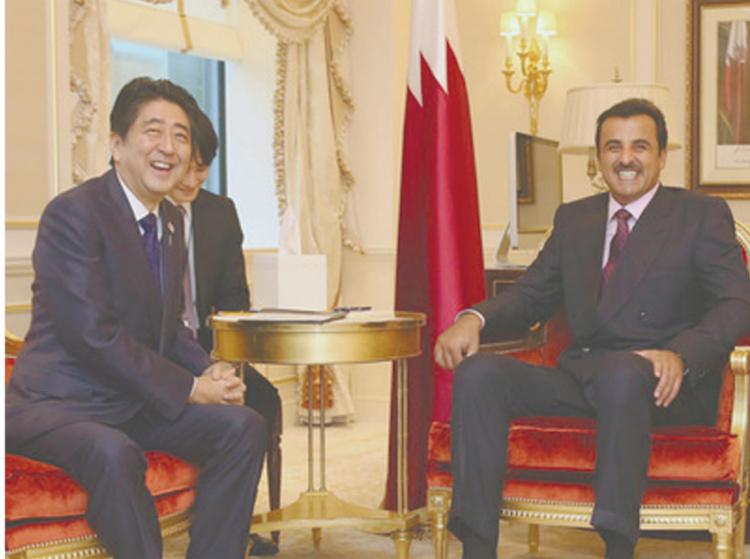
On this auspicious occasion, I take great pleasure in extending my most respectful greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial family, the government

and friendly people of Japan.

The State of Qatar has been enjoying a period of unparalleled prosperity, with outstanding economic progress being evident in the increasing standard of living of its people. Major advances in economic, human and social developments continue to occur. The vision, guidance and the wise leadership of the Emir of the State of Qatar, His Highnesses Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, guarantee further advancements for our country to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity.

Guided by the Qatar National Vision 2030, Qatar has enjoyed one of the world's strongest economic performances over the last decade. By careful and measured development of its extensive oil and gas resources — coupled with substantial investment in transport infrastructure, education, science, technology, health and tourism — Qatar has created a dynamic base to support continued excellent economic performance.

Economic growth remains a matter of primary concern, especially in light of the conditions imposed by the sharp decline in the prices of hydro-



Left: The Emir of the State of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani (right) and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during their meeting in New York in September; Right: His Highness Father Emir (center) camel riding on Qatar's National Sports Day in 2013 EMBASSY OF QATAR



carbons, with the firm determination to proceed with our national development plans.

In spite of the sharp fall in oil and gas prices, Qatar has achieved an annual gross domestic product growth of about 3.6 percent in 2015. GDP is expected to rise to 3.9 percent in 2016, buttressed by the continued vigor of the non-hydrocarbon sectors and the boost to upstream hydrocarbon production from the Barzan gas project.

Qatar has maintained a credit rating that is among the highest in the world. It also continued to achieve advanced positions in global competitiveness indicators. It was ranked 18th in the world and second in the Middle

East according to the latest World Economic Forum report. These figures show that our economy is still strong and international rating agencies have a high degree of confidence in it.

While efforts are being undertaken to reduce dependence on oil and gas in our economic activities to

achieve fiscal diversification, Qatar will continue to pay sufficient attention to the energy sector as an important source to expand our economic base. In this context, we highly appreciate our decades-long strong partnership with Japan, and we will always remain a reliable energy source to provide all of

Japan's energy needs.

The country's low tax rate, codified rule of law and welcoming policies for foreign investment have led to significant partnerships with a number of the world's leading global enterprises, including those from Japan. For these reasons, I seize this opportunity to call on Japanese invest-

ors to visit Qatar and explore the abundant business opportunities available.

Qatar has consistently pursued an independent, principled and pragmatic foreign policy, aimed at international justice and peace, founded on the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, mutual respect and forging friendly relations with its neighbors and all countries of the world. Qatar has been extending generous financial assistance to developing countries in Asia and Africa and actively contributes financially to various regional and international charities and aid funds. The key feature of Qatar's foreign policy is its role as a mediator and negotiator in a number of conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, including those in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon and Sudan.

Qatar firmly respects the diversity of creeds and respects all religions and rejects and denounces all forms and manifestations of terrorism, regardless of its causes, objectives and means.

The bilateral relations between Qatar and Japan have been flourishing and have passed through a mutually beneficial path of strong friendly bonds over the years. These relations continue to evolve at a rapid pace to be more solid, consistent and multifaceted. A strong friendship based on mutual trust has been established between the leaderships of the two countries. H.H. Sheikh Tamim and Japanese Prime Minister H.E. Shinzo Abe have met seven times during the last three years and have thoroughly discussed a wide range of issues on bilateral relations, as well as regional and global issues of mutual concern.

The visit to Japan by the Foreign Minister of the State

of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani in October has given a fresh impetus to our joint efforts to build a comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

Also in October, Japan decided to grant multiple entry visas (valid for three years) to Qatari passport holders. The visa exemption measures for the holders of diplomatic, official and special passports between the two countries will come into effect soon. These developments are to enhance the bilateral relations and to promote the exchanges and interactions between the peoples of the two countries.

In November, the second round of political and security dialogues between the two countries were held in Doha, in which the high-ranking officials from both sides reviewed the latest development of the bilateral cooperation toward a comprehensive partnership and exchanged views on a wide range of issues, including situations in the East Asia, Gulf and Middle East regions and the security policies of both countries. Also in November, the 10th Qatar-Japan Joint Economic Committee meeting was held in Tokyo. Qatar's Minister of Energy and Industry, H.E. Mohammed Saleh Al-Sada, and other government officials attended on the Qatari side, while the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, H.E. Hiroshige Seko, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Kentaro Sonoura, and other government officials represented the Japanese side.

The two sides discussed cooperation in energy, investment, trade and other vital sectors such as health, water, environment, infrastructure, education, power generation, water desalination and civil aviation.

The Qatar Friendship Fund (QFF), created with a \$100 million donation to support the relief efforts for the victims of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, has accomplished its mission in October by financing 12 projects with the aim of helping to restore the hopes and dreams of the victims in the Tohoku region. The projects covered four fields, namely children's education, fisheries, healthcare and entrepreneurship.

A close identity of views and mutual interests remain the center point of bilateral ties, and we are committed to work harder and closely with our Japanese friends and partners to serve our mutual interests while steadily boosting the ties to greater heights.

In closing, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to The Japan Times for giving me this opportunity to address its distinguished readers on this happy occasion. I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to all our friends and partners for their efforts and contributions to enhance the existing friendly relations between Japan and Qatar.

Congratulations

to His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani
the Emir of the State of Qatar on National Day



Enjoy our delicious Arabian cuisine prepared by our Arabian chef. All meat served is prepared in accordance with the Halal method.

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On the occasion of Qatar National Day

Our Warmest Congratulations to

His Highness

Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani,
Emir of the State of Qatar

Chiyoda is proud to be a part of the success and prosperity
of Qatar under the outstanding leadership of His Highness The Emir.



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on National Day

Japan-Qatar Friendship Association

Chairman: Toshio Mita

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the Emir of the State of Qatar



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Sharing mutual bonds of trust

Toshio Mita
CHAIRMAN OF JAPAN-QATAR
FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Japan-Qatar Friendship Association (JQFA), I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the Emir of the State of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, and the people of the State of Qatar on their 45th National Day.

Qatar and Japan have been tied with deep-rooted faith for more than 40 years. At this time, more than a thousand Japanese are living in Qatar, and Japanese firms are expanding their businesses in various fields such as oil and gas development, construction of airports and railways, electricity generation and water desalination projects.

This year was the 20th anniversary of Qatar beginning to supply liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Japan and it has been a year in which a spate of events have occurred, representing our deep relationship in other fields.

It has already been five years since the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. Soon after the disaster, Qatar decided to contribute a donation of \$100

million and supply additional LNG to Japan. The donation has enabled many projects to begin, including a multifunctional fish freezing and processing facility called Masker in Onagawa, Miyagi Prefecture, which has become the lamp of hope for the disaster-hit area.

The documentary film, "Beyond the Tsunami-Onagawa, Hearts Connected," has been shown at theaters across Japan since May, and was produced in thanks to Qatar. This film showed people's efforts, which were triggered by the construction of Masker, in recovering from the disastrous aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami. It was presented in Doha in November after translation into English and Arabic.

Throughout this autumn, we have seen a series of important diplomatic developments between both countries. In September, H.H. Sheikh Tamim and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had their seventh meeting at the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the U.N. Additionally, in October, Foreign Minister H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani visited Japan for the first time.

On the occasion of H.E. Sheikh Mohammed's visit to Japan, the JQFA and Chubu Electric Power Co. held the "Welcoming Reception in honor of the Minister of Foreign

Affairs of the State of Qatar."

Many executives from Japanese companies with close ties to Qatar attended the reception, furthering the deep and warm relationships.

I highly appreciate from the bottom of my heart the opportunity to welcome H.E. Sheikh Mohammed on his first visit to Japan since assuming the office of foreign minister. His visit contributed significantly to the further promotion of the bonds of friendship between Qatar and Japan.

As noted above, both countries maintain active exchanges by government and private companies in broad fields such as politics, economy, culture, education, science and medical care. It is no wonder that a cooperative relationship between both countries will further progress.

As chairman of the JQFA, I value our relationship of mutual trust that has been fostered for many years and would like to completely devote myself to further deepening our mutual interaction and developing together.

In conclusion, I extend my most sincere congratulations on Qatar's continued prosperity and development under the superior leadership of H.H. Sheikh Tamim, and hope our mutual relationship will continue to develop further.



Al-Zubarah, a ruined ancient fort located on the northwestern coast of the Qatar peninsula, is Qatar's most significant archaeological site. EMBASSY OF QATAR

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