

# 50 years of Qatar-Japan relations

## Ongoing efforts to bolster partnerships in many areas

HASSAN BIN MOHAMMED RAFEI  
AL-EMADI  
AMBASSADOR OF THE STATE OF QATAR



It is with great pride and honor that we celebrate today the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the State of Qatar and Japan. This is a historic occasion that provides a new opportunity to reflect on the great achievements that have been made in the course of the distinguished relations and the comprehensive strategic partnership between our friendly countries that was built on solid foundations of friendship, understanding, joint cooperation and was reinforced by mutual respect and trust at the leadership level.

On this important occasion, I am privileged and honored to express on behalf of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the amir of Qatar, the government and the people of the State of Qatar, my warmest greetings and best wishes of good health and happiness to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, Empress Masako, the imperial family and His Excellency Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and to the friendly government and people of Japan further progress and prosperity.

Bilateral relations between the State of Qatar and Japan, since their establishment in 1972, have witnessed a rapid pace of growth and development, and today they have multiple strategic dimensions. The extensive economic cooperation between the two countries formed the backbone of our comprehensive strategic partnership. We in the State of Qatar consider our relations with Japan one of the most important pillars of our foreign policies, as Japan is an important trading partner for the State of Qatar. Japanese companies were our first customers for our liquefied natural gas exports, and Japan is still one of our most important and largest partners in the energy field.

I would like to seize this opportunity to renew our thanks, appreciation and respect to our friends and partners in Japan for the great role they played in the renaissance process witnessed by all of us in Qatar. We highly value the efforts and contributions of the many Japanese companies implementing vital projects in the State of Qatar, including in the sectors of energy, chemicals, infrastructure and water. There are still great opportunities and promising areas in which we can continue our joint cooperation and partnership.

The mutual official visits at the highest levels between our friendly countries have contributed to increasing the consensus of visions and convergence of views between the leaderships of the two countries on many bilateral and other issues of common interest. They also highlighted the need to advance bilateral relations toward achieving the common goals of progress, prosperity and the well-being of our friendly peoples.

In fact, the multifaceted cooperation currently existing between the State of Qatar



The Amir of the State of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani

and Japan reflects the specificity of the relations and the depth of the strong partnership between the two friendly countries, the foundation of which was laid by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Father Amir, (may Allah protect him) during the two historic visits that he made to Japan in 1999 and 2005. The pace of this promotion and development increased after Tamim's two successful visits that he paid to Japan in 2015 and 2019, which resulted in a wide range of agreements and memorandums of understandings that covered various sectors, including energy, infrastructure, education, health care, culture, tourism and more. The sheikh also attended the emperor's enthronement ceremony in October 2019, in a gesture that reflects the great importance that our country's top leadership attaches to Japan.

On the Japanese side, we refer to the important visit of then-Crown Prince Naruhito and then-Crown Princess to the State of Qatar in 1994, as well as the two important visits to the State of Qatar made by former Japanese Prime Minister H.E. Shinzo Abe, in 2007 and 2013, which contributed to the establishment of a new phase of the strong partnership between our countries.

In addition to the strong partnership that exists between the two countries in the field of LNG, relations have witnessed a qualitative leap in a wide range of fields outside the energy sector to include politics, security, trade, investment, innovation, technology, tourism, education and culture. At the political and security levels, there are regular high-level mechanisms for dialogue and consultation to discuss bilateral relations and issues of common interest. The first round of the bilateral political dialogue meeting at the level of the foreign ministers of the two countries was held in Doha in August 2021, in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and then-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan H.E. Toshimitsu

Motegi, during which a number of bilateral, regional and international issues were discussed.

Thanks to the constructive dialogue and mutual trust between our friendly countries, the bilateral cooperation and coordination on issues of common concern have been enhanced. We are working closely in many areas, such as resolving civil conflicts, promoting peace and providing humanitarian aid to developing countries. There is still great potential and a common political will to further enhance bilateral cooperation on important international issues.

In the framework of endeavors to consolidate a comprehensive strategic partnership, implementing the common vision of the leadership of our countries, the State of Qatar has been keen to strengthen and expand cultural and academic cooperation with our Japanese partners. Thanks to our joint cooperation and efforts, the first Japanese school was opened in Doha in 2009 as a means of nurturing generations that understand our cultures.

Efforts to enhance academic and cultural cooperation between educational and scientific research institutes and institutions in the State of Qatar and Japan continues. In May 2021, we celebrated the inauguration of the Chair of the State of Qatar for Islamic Area Studies at Waseda University, in implementation of the lofty directives of Tamim, and the project came as an extension of the cooperation that already exists between Waseda University and Qatar University within the framework of the twinning agreement signed between them.

Bilateral relations have gone beyond the official level to the popular dimension, as the understanding, communication and interaction between the peoples of our two countries deepened thanks to the many cultural activities that were held. The launch of direct flights to Japan by Qatar Airways in 2006 contributed to stimulating mutual trade and achieving remarkable growth in the number of Japanese tourists to the State of Qatar, and the number of Japanese community members in the State of Qatar has increased.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to the friendly people of Japan to visit Qatar this year to enjoy the 2022 FIFA World Cup. We look forward to welcoming them in their "second country," — the State of Qatar.

We are confident that the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of relations between our two friendly countries will increase the momentum to reaffirm friendship, explore various areas of bilateral cooperation, and open new channels for exchanging experiences, developing skills and transferring advanced Japanese technology in all fields, as well as renewing the resolve to continue working to advance relations to higher levels toward consolidating our comprehensive strategic partnership.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to everyone who contributed to the strengthening of bilateral relations in various fields. I give special thanks to the officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry,



the chairman and members of the Japan Parliamentary League for Friendship with the State of Qatar, the chairman and members of the Japan-Qatar Friendship Association, and all other friends, partners and interested parties. We thank them for their efforts, dedication and friendship over the past years, and we hope that they would continue their support for us and make more efforts to move Qatari-Japanese relations to broader horizons in a way that achieves the mutual benefit and interest for our friendly countries and peoples.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to The Japan Times and all partners and sponsors, for their generous contributions to this celebration, and for giving me the opportunity to address their distinguished readers and inform them of the strength of Qatari-Japanese relations on this important historical occasion.



Top: Doha's evening skyline; Above: Lusail Stadium, the largest in Qatar, will host several FIFA World Cup 2022 games, including the final. GETTY IMAGES; THE EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF QATAR

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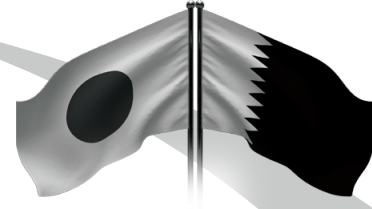
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# 50 years of Qatar-Japan relations

## Friendly bonds continue to grow, flourish

**SATORU KATSUNO**  
CHAIRMAN OF JAPAN-QATAR  
FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION



On behalf of the Japan-Qatar Friendship Association, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the Amir of the State of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani,

and the people of the State of Qatar on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Qatar and Japan.

Though Japan is 8,000 kilometers away from the State of Qatar, the relationship between our countries has become close and deep throughout our 50-year history.

This relationship has been basically built on economic ties, represented by trade in liquefied natural gas, independent water and power plant projects, Hamad International Airport, the Doha Metro and the North Field South project.

On the other hand, 11 years ago, Japan was severely damaged by an unprecedented earthquake and tsunami. In the midst of this calamity, the State of Qatar promptly supplied extra LNG to Japan. Additionally, Qatar also decided to donate \$100 million to Japan, contributing greatly to its recovery efforts.

I will never forget the heartwarming support we received from the State of Qatar. In this way, the trust and friendship between our two countries has become deeper and deeper.

Qatar is now not only leading the global LNG industry, but is also growing in many areas, such as sports, education,

culture and diplomacy.

In last year's Tokyo Olympic Games, Qatari athletes performed splendidly, capturing Qatar's first gold medals in men's weightlifting and the men's high jump.

During the Games, as chairman of the JQFA, I had an audience with His Excellency Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani, president of the Qatar Olympic Committee. Joaan remarked that he would like to deepen the ties with Japan not only in energy, but also in various other fields. It was an unexpected joy to be able to deepen exchanges with Qatar through the sheikh even while the coronavirus pandemic continues.

From November to December, Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup. I hope it will be a wonderful event that will be impressive and memorable for people all over the world. There is nothing I hope for more than the enhancing of the rela-

tions between our countries through these world-class events.

I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize that Qatar and the Qatari people are the dearest friends of Japan and the Japanese people.

As chairman of the JQFA, I will cherish the relationships of trust that have been cultivated over the past 50 years, and I will do my utmost to further strengthen our ties with Qatar, deepen exchanges in various fields and develop together over the next 50 years.

Finally, I would like to close my remarks by wishing for a bright future for our friendship and for the further favorable development of both countries.

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



Above: The Islamic Art Museum in Doha has Islamic art collections dating back more than 1,400 years. Below: Souq Waqif is a traditional market in Doha. GETTY IMAGES



Left: The Pearl-Qatar, one of the largest real estate developments in the Middle East, boasts luxury living, shopping and recreation facilities. Right: The Qanat Quartier neighborhood blends Venetian tradition with Arabic style. THE EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF QATAR; GETTY IMAGES



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Qatar Airways congratulates His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, and the honorable people of the State of Qatar on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the State of Qatar.

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