

Queen Elizabeth II's Birthday Special

Jubilee honors 70 years of public service

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This year, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's official birthday was marked in a way unlike any other. For four days, over the "Platinum Jubilee Weekend" from June 2 to 5, the United Kingdom was trans-

formed by colorful festivities and deeply felt moments of thanks marking the queen's 70th year on the throne. It is an incredible milestone; the longest reign of a British monarch and the first-ever platinum jubilee.

From the world-renowned Trooping the Color to a service of thanksgiving at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, people in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and across the world paid tribute to and celebrated seven decades of dedicated public service.

Since acceding to the throne in 1952, the queen has been a steadfast and reassuring presence, a constant in an ever-changing world. She has represented the people of the United Kingdom and served as head of the Commonwealth with unfailing integrity and confidence.

The queen has been the U.K.'s foremost diplomat. Her extraordinary reign has seen her travel more widely than any other monarch, undertaking over 260 official visits overseas, including nearly 100 state visits. Wherever she has visited, she has demonstrated her values of responsibility and respect for others and become a much loved and respected figure across the globe, including here in Japan.

The relationship between the royal and imperial family is very close. His Majesty Emperor Emeritus Akihito, the then-crown prince, made his first overseas journey to the

United Kingdom to represent Japan at the coronation of the queen in June 1953. The relationship between the U.K. and Japan has only strengthened during her reign.

We are not only long-standing partners with a rich history, but also modern champions of innovation and shared values, and we are continuing to deepen our cooperation and tackle the big issues affecting the world.

Growing partnerships between Japan and the U.K.'s world-class science and research sector, and our shared expertise in earth science, low-carbon and renewable energies can help deliver on the significant commitments made to combat climate change and protect our environment at the 26th U.N. climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, last year.

There are huge opportunities too for both countries to work together on renewables and nuclear deployment speeding up the clean energy transition, and to join forces to enhance economic security, strengthen global supply chains and address the challenges of digital transformation.

Japan is the U.K.'s closest security partner in Asia. We want to build upon existing close cooperation on global security, as demonstrated last year by the visit to Japan of the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth and her task force, and the joint exercises carried out. We will work tirelessly to ensure the stability and security of the Indo-Pacific. The reciprocal access agreement, agreed to in principle by our prime ministers in London last month, will allow our two nations to work together ever more closely. As shown by our joint work on the development of the landmark Future Combat Air Systems project, this cooperation is only set to go from strength to strength.

The bilateral free trade agreement that entered into force in early 2021 reflects the U.K.'s modern approach to trade. Successful U.K. accession to the Comprehensive

and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership will further enhance opportunities for Japan and the U.K. in trade and investment.

With border restrictions easing, we can now invest with renewed enthusiasm in the important science, education and cultural people-to-people links that sustain us. The queen is patron of the British Council that brings together U.K. and Japanese universities and cultural institutions, and helps people across Japan to improve their English-language skills. Visiting exhibitions from the Victoria and Albert Museum and appearances in Japan by The Royal Ballet and London Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Harry Potter stage show later this year are sure to delight and enthral.

To support Platinum Jubilee celebrations in Japan, the British Embassy and British Council produced a pack (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/her-majesty-the-queens-platinum-jubilee-community-pack-in-japan>) of information and ideas for communities to hold their own events across the country, from community lunches to classroom activities to planting a tree as part of "The Queen's Green Canopy" initiative. Events in Japan will span the whole of the 2022 Platinum Jubilee year, so there is time for everyone to get involved.

Yet we cannot forget that it has been a difficult two years for all of us and that moments of celebration and togetherness should be cherished. Others are not so fortunate. Every day we are witnessing images of the impact on innocent civilians of the unprovoked war against Ukraine. The U.K. stands with Ukraine. It is precisely in these difficult times that the queen is an inspiration for us of fortitude in the face of adversity and the importance of standing by our values.

We are always stronger when we stand with our friends and partners, as we con-

tinue to do with Japan. In this special year for the queen, we have much to look forward to as the U.K. and Japan deepen further our relationship and come ever closer together.

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



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, seen in Edinburgh in 2021, celebrates her Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years on the throne, this year.
REUTERS

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