

## Oman national day

## Expanding relations, developed with trust and friendship

Khalid Al-Muslahi  
AMBASSADOR OF THE SULTANATE OF  
OMAN

The Sultanate of Oman commemorates today its 43rd National Day, and the people of Oman celebrate this significant occasion in the nation's modern history with a great deal of pride and joy. The nation conveys its heartfelt gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said for his visionary guidance and nation-building efforts. During the past 43 years of the blessed Renaissance, the development and prosperity seen by the Sultanate has been absolutely astounding.



Over the years of Oman's modern renaissance, the Omani citizen constituted the cornerstone and the moving force for progress at all levels. The Omani people celebrate the National Day while building their country with firm will and strong determination, working sincerely to achieve the goals of the development march that advances in well-studied steps toward maintaining the country's prosperous present and preparing for a bright dignified future.

On this memorable occasion, I have the honor, on behalf of H.M. Sultan Qaboos bin Said, his government and the people of Oman, to convey the greetings and best wishes of good health, success, peace and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and to the members of the Imperial family, as well as the government and the friendly people of Japan.

Let me also express my sincere appreciation to H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Honorary Chairman of the Japan-Oman Society, for his support and encouragement to the relations

between Oman and Japan. It is the desire of the government and people of Oman that under his leadership, the friendship and partnerships between our two countries will be further strengthened, and wish him success in his significant task of providing leadership to the government and people of Japan.

#### Oman's foreign policy

The basic principles of Oman's foreign policy stem from the strategic vision of H.M. Sultan Qaboos about peaceful coexistence between all peoples, neighborliness, noninterference in the internal affairs of others and mutual respect for national sovereignty.

While Oman's foreign and domestic policy embodies the traits of the Omani identity — known for calmness, frankness and concern for others, and keen on positive interaction with them — it also embodies a clear vision about how relations with other nations should be. It is a vision that has always manifested wise leadership, farsightedness, and strong keenness to build the best ties with all countries in a manner that enhances peace, security and stability in the region, and provides a climate that is conducive to development and prosperity for everyone.

Inspired by the thought of H.M. Sultan Qaboos, Omani diplomacy has accorded attention to friendship with the world through good, balanced ties with each country that takes positive steps on the way to cooperation, and commits itself to international charters and U.N. principles for achieving progress, and consolidating the foundations of international stability.

Hence the response of Oman's foreign policy to all events that took place in the region and the world has been prudent and enlightened; so these events, even at the height of their hostility, did not influence Oman's foreign



His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said

policy in any negative way.

In his Royal address at the opening of Majlis Oman's 5th term of 2012, H.M. Sultan Qaboos reaffirmed, that the essence of Oman's foreign policy is "the call for peace, harmony and close cooperation among all nations, as well as commitment to principles of justice, fairness, noninterference in the internal affairs of others, and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in a manner that safeguards to humanity its security, stability and prosperity."

On grounds of this clear and deep vision, Oman established its relations with other states in its capacity as a peace-loving nation that is always bent upon resolving disputes through positive dialogue and by peaceful means. Oman spares no effort in fostering peace, security and stability in its surroundings because it has gained friendship, credibility and esteem, both as a leader and as a state. Oman's benign efforts and endeavors succeeded many times in rapprochement of views, and overcoming disputes between states in the region

and beyond. This earned Oman more respect at all levels.

Acting on humanitarian grounds and on its awareness that many civilians fall prey to crises, conflicts and misunderstanding in relations between countries, Oman exerted acclaimed and successful efforts that led to the release of hostages belonging to other countries. This reflects the deep respect and appreciation that Oman has gained at all regional and international levels.

Over the recent period, Oman witnessed considerable political, diplomatic and economic activity as part of its keenness to go ahead with the enhancement of relations with friendly countries to help achieve the mutual interests that the country shares with other countries.

Also, following a deep conviction in cultural diversity, and the importance of communication and dialogue to achieve understanding among peoples of the world, and facilitate their cooperation in addressing common challenges, the Omani leadership took keen interest in extending bridges of cultural, intellectual and scientific contact, in a variety of ways, with people belonging to other civilizations.

#### Oman-Japan relations

Last year was a milestone for Oman-Japan relations as we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the formal establishment of diplomatic relations with many events and activities in Tokyo and Muscat. With nearly 400 years of friendly contacts, the historical relations between Oman and Japan were founded on mutual respect, and since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972 they have been developed with reciprocal trust and friendship, and the interaction and cooperation between the two countries have since been growing rapidly on various levels, not only economically,



Landmarks: (Clockwise from above) The Oman Century Ride 2012 — commemorating the 40th anniversary of Oman-Japan relations; petrochemical production in Oman reached 9.5 million tons in 2012, marking a year of solid growth for the region's industry; mosques are an important part of Omani daily life; Sultan Qaboos Port, which is to be revamped into a tourist marina.

EMBASSY OF THE SULTANATE OF OMAN



but also politically and culturally.

The economic, trade and technical cooperation between Oman and Japan has been the backbone of a long and fruitful relationship that continues to prosper and grow. Japan was one of the first countries to receive Omani crude oil, and the export of this product and liquefied natural gas (LNG), as well as other hydrocarbon products has increased over the years, making Japan one of the most important markets for Oman's exports.

Oman was ranked 31st among Japan's top trading partners and was the third-biggest market for Japanese exports to the Middle East and the North Africa region in 2012. Japan on the other hand is Oman's second top trading partner, and bilateral trade between the two nations has been expanding over the years reaching a record \$10.5 billion in 2012.

For Japan, Oman has always been a reliable and stable source of energy supplies. In 2012, Oman was the eighth-largest crude oil supplier to Japan, which imported 39.2 million barrels of Omani crude, accounting for 2.9 percent of its crude oil imports. Oman was also the ninth-largest LNG supplier to Japan, accounting for 4.6 percent of Japan's total imports of the product, which reached 3.98 million metric tons.

Although oil and LNG repre-

sent the greatest share of Japan's total imports from Oman, imports of fisheries and agricultural products are also significant. Out of Japan's total imports of these products from the Middle East and North Africa, Oman is ranked third for fisheries and fourth in agricultural products.

Oman is also a major importer of Japanese automobiles, machinery and electric appliances among other products. This vast and voluminous trade relationship makes Japan the largest trading partner to Oman in substance.

While economic relations have been based in these key areas and industries for years, the nature of this relationship is far more complex, and is set to grow and diversify even further in the coming years. One of the areas in which this economic diversification will be exemplified is the various developmental projects in Oman, and in technology transfer and human resource development. Cooperation with Japanese industries is set to become a major aspect of this new area of economic relations between the two nations. Japanese enterprises have in recent years become involved in projects related to oil and gas, power generation and water desalination, shipping and environmental engineering technologies.

Finance is another area of potential, as Japanese investments and financing in Omani projects continue to expand and provide mutual benefits. To create a more conducive environment for such activities, the Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation between Oman and Japan will be signed shortly. Negotiations for the Protection and Promotion of Investments was initiated last year, and is expected to be finalized very soon. Furthermore, negotiations are being held for a free-trade agreement between Japan and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Beyond the economic realm, relations between Oman and Japan have witnessed throughout the years the exchange of high-ranking official visits, from members of our royal families, senior government officials, members of parliament, business and academic leaders, in addition to growing exchanges and cooperation in the fields of culture, tourism, science and education, sports and other areas.

One of the most important aspects of strengthening bilateral ties in today's world is the encouragement of cultural exchanges and understanding. Japan and Oman, whose ties stretch as far back as the 17th century and have shared close formal relations since 1972, have recognized this need, and given special emphasis to the promotion of culture through various events and activities. This has included exhibitions, special symposiums and lectures, film screenings, exchanges of Omani and Japanese students, sporting encounters, music and dance performances, cooperation in various academic and research fields, and other initiatives and special occasions. These wide-ranging events were attended by prominent members from the political, diplomatic, business, academic and educational

spheres within Oman and Japan, while also attracting public attendance and attention from both countries to get a glimpse into the unique relations established between the two nations.

Some of these special events held over recent years include the "Omani Cultural Days," an exhibition of Oman's culture and heritage at the Tokyo International Forum in 2010, which drew as many as 50,000 visitors.

Another major development is the establishment of the Sultan Qaboos Chair for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Tokyo in 2010. The chair was established by a generous endowment from H.M. the sultan, for the purpose of promoting Middle Eastern studies, and the further exchange of Japanese and Omani students across borders. Today, the number of Omani students in Japan studying a wide variety of subjects and pursuing degrees from the undergraduate to Ph.D. level has increased tenfold from five years ago. This growing trend in the number of Omani students studying in Japan reflects the power and influence of cultural relations between nations.

In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the people of Japan for their kindness and hospitality, and convey Oman's appreciation to the government and people of Japan for the kind cooperation extended to us for many years, and our profound appreciation to all the members of the Japan-Oman Parliamentary Friendship Leagues, the Japan-Oman Society, the Hiroshima-Oman Friendship Association, the Japan-Oman Club and the Japan-Arab Association.

I would also like to thank The Japan Times for giving me this opportunity. I am similarly indebted to our sponsors, whose generosity has made this supplement possible.

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Sultanate of Oman  
on the Occasion of  
the 43rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day



ITOCHU Corporation

<http://www.itochu.co.jp/>

TOKYO Headquarters 5-1, Kita-Aoyama 2-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo Tel. 03-3497-2121  
OSAKA Headquarters 1-3, Umeda 3-chome, Kita-ku, Osaka Tel. 06-7638-2121

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Sultanate of Oman  
on the Occasion of  
the 43rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day

**Marubeni**

<http://www.marubeni.com>

**Congratulations**  
to the People of the Sultanate of Oman  
on the Occasion of the 43rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day

日本オマーンクラブ  
**Japan-Oman Club**

[japan.oman.club@gmail.com](mailto:japan.oman.club@gmail.com)  
<http://www.omanclub.jp>

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Sultanate of Oman  
on the Occasion of  
the 43rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day

**Mitsubishi Corporation**

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Sultanate of Oman  
on the Occasion of  
the 43rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day



**MITSUI & CO., LTD.**

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Sultanate of Oman  
on the Occasion of  
the 43rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day



**MOL Mitsui O.S.K. Lines**

SINCE 1884  
130th  
Anniversary

1-1 Toranomon 2-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8688, Japan

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Sultanate of Oman  
on the Occasion of  
the 43rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day

**Sumitomo Corporation**

<http://www.sumitomocorp.co.jp/english>