

Qatar national day

Significant political, social, economic development

Yousef Mohamed Bilal
AMBASSADOR OF THE STATE OF
QATAR

Today marks the National day of the State of Qatar, a most significant and happy occasion that occupies a very special place in our hearts. On Dec. 18 every year, the people of Qatar celebrate this momentous event to commemorate the foundation of the state, highlight its identity and history, as well as honor the men and women who took part in the process of building our nation, consolidating its unity and the attaining the steady progress and prosperity of the State of Qatar.

The celebration of the national day presents an opportunity for the reflection on our rich history and to proudly take stock of our outstanding achievements. It is also a



time to confirm our commitment to move forward with confident vision to realize the ambitions of our wise leadership to ensure further growth and development for our country.

On this auspicious occasion I am honored and privileged to express, on behalf of the government and people of the State of Qatar, my deepest reverence and warmest greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and members of the Imperial family. I also would like to make use of this opportunity to extend my sincerest greetings and best wishes to the government and friendly people of Japan.

Thanks to the clear vision and the strong commitment of H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, emir of the State of Qatar, our country has been able, within a short period of time, to make remarkable advancements in terms of economic and social development. The wisdom of our leadership and the loyalty of our



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

people and their dedication to state-building efforts have led to realize the renaissance and development of Qatar and enhanced its active and leading role at the regional and international levels.

The ambitious policies for best using our rich natural re-

sources helped Qatar's dynamic economy to be one of the most rapidly growing economies in the world. The development of Qatar's huge oil and natural gas reserves has driven its rising wealth. Qatar also has large potential for further growth through domestic investments in the non-hydrocarbon sector. The main areas of investment have shifted from oil and gas to construction and transport.

Qatar plans to spend more than \$225 billion through 2016 on infrastructure and construction projects as part of the "Qatar National Vision 2030" and preparations to host the World Cup in 2022.

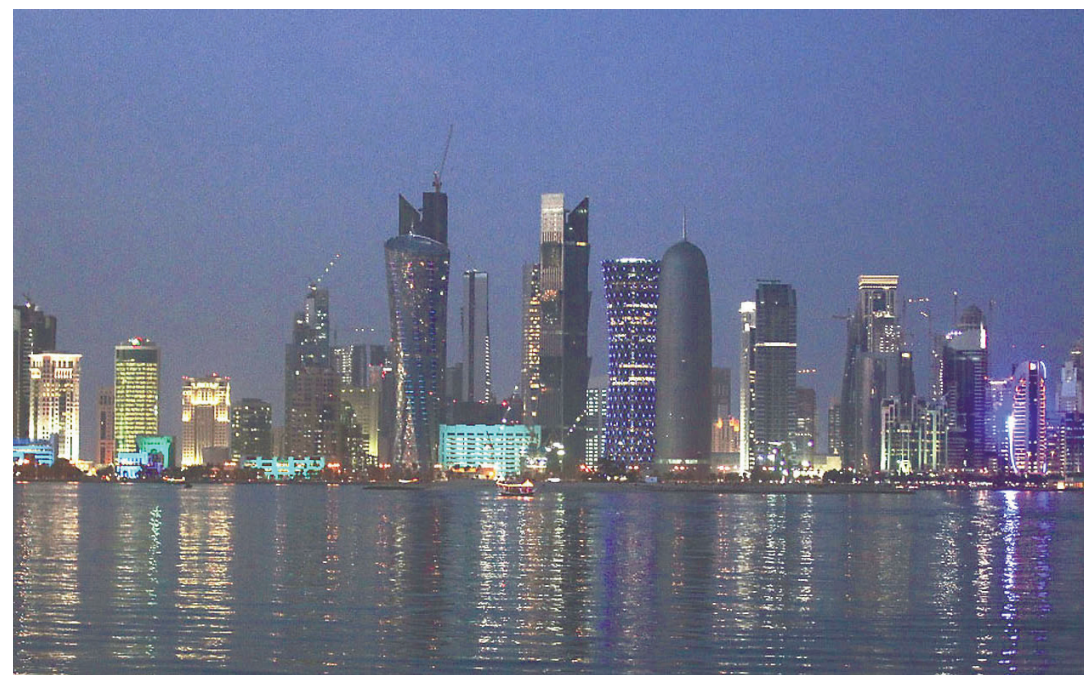
On the diplomatic front, Qatar steadfastly pursues a balanced foreign policy of noninterference in the affairs of other countries. We favor an open strategy based on mutual respect and interest, and unswervingly adhere to peace, stability and development of the region and the world. Qatar actively participates in regional and international affairs and constantly deepens its friendship and cooperation with all countries.

Bilateral relations between Qatar and Japan have been traditionally strong and friendly and developing steadily. Economic cooperation is the backbone of these relations, as Japan is one of Qatar's most important strategic partners in the field of energy. These relations, however, continue to diversify and expand at a rapid pace to include nonenergy areas, as the two sides are making strenuous efforts to transform them into a mutually rewarding strategic partnership.

Channels of bilateral consultation and dialogue at all levels on economic, political and security issues have been reinforced. In June, our countries launched the first round



Qatar air force planes and soldiers on camels take part in festivities celebrating Qatar National Day. EMBASSY OF QATAR



A night view of the Doha skyline EMBASSY OF QATAR

Promoting friendship based on confidence

Toshio Mita
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-QATAR
FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Japan-Qatar Friendship Association, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, emir of the State of Qatar, and the people of the State of Qatar on their National Day.

Qatar, which keeps a stable supply of abundant energy resources such as liquefied natural gas and oil for Japan, is an extremely important ally for a country with few natural resources such as Japan. The remarkable economic growth in Qatar has been reported in the Japanese media and we are proud of this success as if it were our own.

Qatar and Japan have a long



diplomatic relationship dating back more than 40 years and 2014 has been a year that has left great impressions from the viewpoint of the deepening friendship between Qatar and Japan.

One of the highlights of the year was when Her Highness Sheikh Moza bint Nasser, consort of the Father Emir of the State of Qatar and chairperson of the Qatar Foundation, visited Japan in April.

H.H. Sheikh Moza had an Imperial audience with Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as meetings with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other dignitaries. Additionally, she visited R&D institutes in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, and Kobe, to exchange views on bilateral cooperation in the fields of science, technology and health care with Japanese experts. We also had the pleasure of H.H. Sheikh Moza's company at a welcome reception in Kyoto. During her stay, she had active exchanges in

various fields.

H.H. Sheikh Moza's visit and the insight she was able to share with us contributed significantly to the further progress of the friendship between Qatar and Japan, for which I am grateful.

When Japan was hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in March 2011, our country received wholehearted support such as additional supplies of LNG and money in the form of the Qatar Friendship Fund (QFF), from Qatar.

Through the QFF, some projects beginning with the "Mas-kar," multifunctional fish processing facility located in Onagawa, Miyagi Prefecture, have been progressing in Japan.

In May and August, educational facilities for the Student City and Finance Park program were newly opened in the cities of Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture and Sendai.

They have become beacons of hope toward reconstruction of the disaster-hit Tohoku area and

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for all the support and friendship your esteemed country has kindly extended to Japan.

I was appointed the Chairman of Japan-Friendship Association in July. In September, I visited Doha and had the honor of meeting His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani, prime minister and interior minister of the State of Qatar and other dignitaries. At the time, I received warm words of encouragement from Sheikh Abdullah and I would like to completely devote myself to further strengthening our bilateral ties based on mutual trust for years to come.

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

of political and security dialogue in Tokyo, with senior officials from the foreign and defense ministries discussing issues of common interest on the bilateral, regional and international fronts. The eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Japan-Qatar Joint Economic Committee was held in Tokyo, on Nov. 6, during which the two sides discussed ways of enhancing bilateral cooperation in energy, investment and trade.

The Qatar Friendship Fund (QFF), which was launched in 2012 as a gift from the State of Qatar to the Japanese people to support relief efforts fol-

lowing the 2011 Great Japan Earthquake and tsunami, accomplished several projects with the focus on the strategic priorities of child education, fisheries and health-care. The QFF plans to complete all of its projects as early as February and aims to nurture hope for victims by offering direct assistance in a prompt, effective and sustainable manner.

We are confident our joint commitment and hard work toward strengthening the existing friendly relations will yield positive results for promoting a future-oriented strategic partnership.



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 and I would like to express my best wishes for all to have a very happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Congratulations

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



Chaudhry Asif Mahmood
CEO, Pak Japan group of companies

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for Qatar

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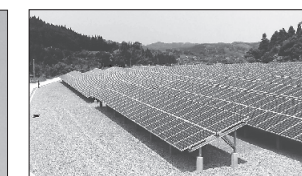
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History, profile of State of Qatar

Foundation

Descended from the Tameem Tribe, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani was the first emir and founder of the modern State of Qatar. Born in 1826, he acquired full capability in the management of the country's affairs in his youth, succeeded in guiding its policies with wisdom and steered the country during a period that witnessed major events and changes. At the local level, he sought to turn Qatar into a single unified and independent entity. Under his leadership, Qatar emerged as a coherent and stable country whose tribes he assembled to usher in its future, thus consolidating its existence and borders.

Dec. 18, 1878, was a turning point when Sheikh Jassim took power. It was also when the inception of the modern State of Qatar was achieved as a result of Sheikh Jassim's assiduous efforts that led to full recognition of Qatar's independence. The era of Sheikh Jassim was marked by security, justice and welfare. Total renaissance and prosperity were then experienced in all social and economic aspects of life. That was clearly evident in the pearl diving business as Qatar became one of the world's major pearl exporters.

Qatar today

Independent since 1971, the State of Qatar is a constitutional monarchy ruled by the Emir, His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani.

Since its independence, the economy of Qatar has grown and diversified, reducing reliance on pearl diving and currently securing its wealth from its huge oil and gas reserves. Qatar's GDP has risen to as much as \$92.5 billion and with the latest population estimates at 1.8 million, equates to a per

capita income of \$101,000, the highest in the world.

The economy of Qatar is one of the most active economies in the Middle East and North Africa. By 2030, Qatar aims to achieve its national vision of being an advanced, educated society capable of sustaining a better standard of living. Qatar strives to become a knowledge-based economy and the development of human capital is one of the four pillars of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

With a strong, diversified economy, abundance of natural resources, booming tourism sector and high levels of both inbound and outbound investment, Qatar is enticing international visitors for both business and leisure. The Global Peace Index ranks Qatar as one of the 25 most peaceful countries in the world.

Foreign policy

Qatar is placing increasing emphasis on supporting the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and spares no effort to bring about solidarity and strengthen the ties of mutual trust and communication between Arab countries. The country propagates the wisdom of peaceful means in resolving all disputes among countries, approves U.N. efforts to uphold peace and security and works to maintain good relations with all peace-loving peoples and countries.

The nation is obliged to maintain and enhance friendly relations with all countries of the world based on shared interests and mutual respect and to actively contribute to preserve peace, security and prosperity around the world.

Qatar works very hard to establish close ties of cooperation with all peace-loving countries and peoples, while

extending generous financial aid to many developing countries in Asia and Africa. The country also contributes to various regional and international aid funds to create the widest possible avenues of international cooperation.

Qatar firmly respects the diversity of creeds and respects all religions within our country and beyond and rejects any kind of divisions between Arab societies on a sectarian basis. Qatar rejects and denounces all forms and manifestations of terrorism, regardless of its causes, objectives and means. It, however, differentiates between terrorism and people's struggles and legitimate rights of freedom and self-determination in accordance with the provisions of international law.

National Vision 2030

The Qatar national vision for the year 2030 provides the framework within which national strategies and implementation plans are being developed. The aim of Qatar National Vision 2030 is to transform Qatar into an advanced country by the year 2030. It hopes to create a vibrant and prosperous Qatar, sustaining development and providing its entire population with a high standard of living. The national vision foresees development through four interconnected pillars:

- Human development; development of the entire population to enable them to sustain a prosperous society
- Social development; development of a just and caring society based on high moral standards that is capable of playing a significant role in global partnerships for development
- Economic development; development of a competi-

tive and diversified economy capable of meeting the needs of, and securing a high standard of living for, its entire population in both the present and future

• Environmental development; management of the environment such that there is harmony between economic growth, social development and environmental protection

Economy

The economy is dominated by oil and gas revenues, which account for 70 percent of export income. With an area of 11,400 sq. km, Qatar boasts the world's third largest gas reserves. The surging services sector led by financial and real estate services, transport, communications and booming construction fueled by mega-infrastructure projects, are helping gas-rich Qatar to achieve higher-than-expected economic growth this year and the next.

The Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (MDPS) released the Qatar Economic Outlook for 2014-15, forecasting real GDP growth of 6.8 percent and 7.8 percent for 2014 and 2015, respectively.

A combination of factors, including heavy government investment in infrastructure (roads, Doha Metro, rail, drainage and sanitation projects), rising population and visitor numbers after the opening of the new Hamad International Airport, will likely drive higher growth in the coming years.

The diversification of the economy is expected to continue on higher investment spending.

Oil and gas

Oil and gas constitute the backbone of Qatar's economy. The State of Qatar is making efforts to diversify its economy



Clockwise from above, Desert adventures in a camel caravan; the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar; exciting soccer games; handicrafts at the newly restored traditional-style Souq Waqif market are just some of the attractions that Qatar offers to tourists from around the world.



EMBASSY OF QATAR

to alleviate dependence on crude oil (daily production of about 850,000 barrels), and gas (daily production of about 18 billion cubic feet) produced from the North Field, which holds gas reserves of about 380 trillion cubic feet. The Qatari leadership endeavors to increase production capacity of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) to be more than 77.4 million tons annually.

Highest per capita wealth

The country has enormous oil and gas wealth, especially in relation to the size of its population. It has the third largest gas reserves in the world after Russia and Iran, estimated at 885 trillion cubic feet. Along with crude oil and condensate reserves, this equates to known reserves of around 193 billion

barrels of oil equivalent in 2012. At current extraction rates, Qatar's known gas reserves are estimated to last 160 years. With Qatar's population of only 1.8 million and nationals accounting for only 14 percent of the total population, hydrocarbon reserves and revenue per national are the highest in the world.

Nonhydrocarbon potential

With the highest savings rate in the world (60.8 percent of GDP), Qatar has huge potential for further growth through domestic investment in the nonhydrocarbon sector. A major program of infrastructure investment has been launched to support the diversification of the economy away from hydrocarbons, leading to double digit growth in the nonhydro-

carbon sector.

The main areas of investment have shifted from oil and gas to construction and transport. The bulk of these projects are expected to be completed ahead of the FIFA World Cup in 2022, driving growth over the medium term. Rapid growth is helping to build an increasingly skilled workforce in Qatar. Beyond 2022, Qatar is expected to enter a new human capital phase of growth that will depend on attracting, developing and retaining talent. In line with its National Vision 2030, Qatar aims to transform itself into a knowledge-based economy.

Investment incentives

Qatar utilizes the revenues from its vast wealth of oil and gas in other sectors with a view to expanding its economic base and developing a strong private sector. Through its full and active membership in the World Trade Organization and flexible business regulations, it works to attract foreign investors to engage in sectors besides oil and gas. Qatar provides many investment incentives, including low electricity, water and gas rates; a nominal lease rate of only 5 Qatari Riyals per square meter per year for industrial land sites for the first three years from site assignment and project operation, after which rates increase to 10 Qatari Riyals. Additionally, there is an import tax exemption on heavy duty machinery, spare parts and raw materials. There are also no restrictions on foreign ex-

change or the transfer of profits abroad and regulations and procedures to import skilled and unskilled workers are flexible. Other benefits include tax-free salaries, excellent medical and educational facilities and state-of-the-art telecommunication facilities

Low corruption

Qatar is the second-least corrupt country in the Middle East and North African region, according to Transparency International's recent report.

The country ranked 26th out of 175 countries surveyed in the Corruption Perceptions Index 2014, which was recently released by Transparency International. Qatar scored 69 points in the 2014 index, improving its performance compared to the previous year when it scored 68 points.

Bilateral relations:

Qatar-Japan relations are characterized by mutual trust and respect, crowned by flourishing trade and economic cooperation that continues to gain strength at a steadfast pace as the two sides work to advance these ties into a strategic partnership. Bilateral relations, established in 1972, have grown several fold in coverage and scale, covering a wide spectrum of political, economic, educational, health, cultural, scientific and technological cooperation.

The vibrant economic ties between our two countries are the mainstay of the strong relations of friendship and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

On the occasion of Qatar National Day
Our Warmest Congratulations to
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Qatar national day

Strong bonds with Japan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

cooperation, with trade and investment in energy constituting the backbone of our strategic economic ties.

Japanese companies are active players in Qatar's energy sector. Their partnerships include LNG and refinery ventures, power plants, exploration, development and production sharing agreements, as well as engineering and construction.

Japan is Qatar's largest trading partner with total volume of more than \$31.2 billion in 2013. Qatar is Japan's second largest LNG supplier and is also Japan's third largest supplier of crude oil. The country is committed to Japan's energy security by ensuring reliable and stable LNG and oil supplies.

The two countries commenced this month, in Tokyo, the first round of negotiations on a bilateral Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to income tax.

On Nov. 6, the eighth meeting of the Qatar-Japan Joint Economic Committee was held in Tokyo. H.E. Mohammed Saleh Al-Sada, minister of energy and industry, and other government officials represented the Qatari side, while H.E. Yoichi Miyazawa, minister of economy, trade and industry, H.E. Yasuhide Nakayama, state minister for foreign affairs and other government officials represented the Japanese side. Both sides reviewed the latest update on the development of bilateral cooperation toward a "Comprehensive Partnership," and discussed the possibility of further accumulating tangible cooperation in a wide range of fields, including energy and business.



Children wearing traditional clothing during Qatar National Day celebrations EMBASSY OF QATAR

On June 19, the first Japan-Qatar Security Dialogue was held in Tokyo. The Qatari side headed by H.E. Mohammed Abdullah Al-Rumaihi, minister's assistant for foreign affairs, and other senior officials from the ministries of foreign affairs and defense also attended.

From the Japanese side, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by Tsukasa Uemura, director general, Middle Eastern and African affairs and senior officials from the Ministry of Defense participated in the dialogue. This was the first such dialogue, and both sides exchanged views on a wide range of issues, including situations in East Asia, the Gulf and Middle East, as well as the security policies of both countries.

Qatar Friendship Fund:

The Qatar Friendship Fund (QFF) is a \$100 million gift of friendship from Qatar to Japan to support victims affected by the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami.

In addition to building a strong friendship between the Japanese and Qatari people, one of the main priorities of the Qatar Friendship Fund was to provide prompt and effective assistance to victims of the

areas affected by the disaster. This has been done through the rehabilitation of industries and infrastructure and the construction of development projects not funded by any other sources. The QFF supports projects that address urgent, crucial, and sustainable needs among the people of Japan to maximize its impact on the greatest number of beneficiaries. The QFF focuses on three main priority areas — child education, fisheries and healthcare — over a three-year period (2012-2014).

The first project, "Maskar," was a \$23 million multifunctional fish processing plant and launched on Oct. 13, 2012. The plant, which is in Onawa, Miyagi Prefecture, is helping to rebuild local fishing industries left devastated by the disaster. Many other projects followed.

The QFF is working on nine projects in the fisheries, education and health care sectors in the three affected prefectures of Fukushima, Miyagi and Iwate. Most of the large-scale projects have already been completed and are contributing to improving the lives of the affected people in these areas. All of these projects are expected to be completed by next February.

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