

## Iran National Day

## Working for peace and stability

Reza Nazar Ahari  
AMBASSADOR OF IRAN

On behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran's government and people, I would like to extend through the esteemed columns of The Japan Times our warmest greetings and best wishes to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, as well as the government and friendly people of Japan on this auspicious occasion of 37th Anniversary of the Glorious Islamic Revolution of Iran. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate my compatriots on this happy occasion.

Thirty-seven years ago, the endeavors of the Iranian people under the dynamic leadership of the late Imam Khomeini came to fruit and the foundation for establishment of a system based on Islam and in accordance with people's rights was provided. During the past 37 years, in spite of many internal and external obstacles, the Iranian people have gained political independence, executed development plans, created a broad-based educational, scientific, artistic and sports environment that the Iranian people had desired for centuries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran with a population of 78 million and an area of more than 1,648,000 sq. km is located in a sensitive and strategic area of prime importance for world hydrocarbon supplies. Iran is a bridge connecting four continents and many vessels pass through its waterways and near its shores. Therefore we are convinced that we should

play an active and positive role for regional and international peace and security.

**Settling nuclear issue**

I am delighted to see that the negative propaganda regarding the peaceful nuclear program of my country turned out to be false and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1 group (China, France, the U.K., the U.S., Russia and Germany) reached a historic nuclear deal in July. The agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is a breakthrough for the continuation of our peaceful nuclear program and international security.

In September, Yukio Amano, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), visited Iran's nuclear sites and in a subsequent report to the 35-member IAEA board asserted that there was no credible indication of Iran researching nuclear weapons technology. Therefore, the U.S., the U.K. and France joined the other members of the board, ending the inquiry.

This is a crucial step for the enhancement of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the international community. The final decision of the IAEA proved the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program. Additionally, on Jan. 16, Iran and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the U.S., the U.K., France, Russia and China — and Germany started to implement the nuclear agreement reached in July.

After the JCPOA went into effect, all nuclear-related sanctions imposed on Iran by the European Union, U.N. Security Council and the U.S. were lifted. Iran in return has put some limitations on its nuclear activities.

The resolution of the nuclear issue, through dialogue and

diplomacy, indicates that with the necessary will, many of the outstanding international conflicts can be resolved without resorting to force and violence. I am convinced that the JCPOA implementation is a suitable opportunity for the world community to expand their cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As the Iran nuclear deal reaches implementation stage and sanctions are lifted, we hope the world can now make use of Iran's vast economic opportunities. It's also a time for the countries of the region and the international community to come together to tackle the problem of extremism.

**Relations with Japan**

Iran and Japan, as two distinguished civilizations of Asia, enjoy a long history with no record of hostility toward each other. Although the relationship between the two countries goes back at least 1,000 years, the modern history of official relations dates to the early 1930s.

The victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 contributed to further solidify the existing amicable relations between Iran and Japan. Faced with dramatic changes on the international political stage, the two countries have been expanding their consultations to contribute further to regional and international peace and stability. To realize this goal, officials of both countries have held regular consultations and dialogue.

President Hassan Rouhani and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held a meeting on the sidelines of the sixth Asia-Africa Summit Meeting in Indonesia in April. They reviewed bilateral relations, as well as exchanged views on many important international issues. Both agreed that further expansion of comprehensive Iran-Japan ties and cooperation



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran



Hassan Rouhani, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran

under current conditions is a must.

Meanwhile, H.E. Ali-Akbar Salehi, vice president and head of the Iran Atomic Energy Organization, visited Japan, meeting with senior officials. H.E. Fumio Kishida, the minister of foreign affairs of Japan, visited Iran in October and held talks with his counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, as well as other senior Iranian officials. The two countries also had several exchanges of visits by Iranian and Japanese parliamentarians.

Japan has lifted its sanctions against Iran, joining the ranks of the world's major economies to normalize trade ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Japanese Cabinet approved the lifting of sanctions on Jan. 22 following the implementation of the nuclear deal. The government indicated that Japan would like to strengthen its cooperative relationship with Iran further and contribute to the peace and stability of the Middle East through a friendly relationship with Iran.

Following these developments, H.E. Ali Tayebnia, the



President of Iran Hassan Rouhani (right) and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands at a summit meeting in September on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York. EMBASSY OF IRAN

Iranian minister of economic affairs and finance visited Japan at the beginning of February. During this visit an agreement on reciprocal promotion and protection of investment, as well as a memorandum of cooperation among the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance, were signed between Tehran and Tokyo.

These paved the way for Japanese companies to boost their economic and commercial cooperation, as well as investment in my country.

I would also like to mention that in August, Japan's State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry H.E. Daishiro Yamaguchi visited Tehran at the head of a delegation representing 23 companies. Executives from major trading houses and large banks accompanied the minister on the visit. It goes without saying that Japan has been one of the main economic partners of Iran during the past three decades and with the lifting of the sanctions, potentials for new fields of cooperation between the two countries have been opened.

Iran and Japan have expressed their readiness to cooperate in various areas, including nuclear technology, anti-earthquake architecture, nuclear power plant safety in natural disasters, health, sanitation, railroad and express trains, hydrocarbons and others. I should also add that Iran's geopolitical situation could turn it into a place for joint production by Iran and Japan with export of the commodities to Iran's neighboring countries; a market with a population of 300 million.

In terms of culture, Iran-Japan cultural relations date back to ancient times and in recent decades, these ex-

changes have gained momentum and we can witness the increase in the number of Japanese Iranologists and Persian scholars, as well as further interest by Iranian researchers and students to accomplish their academic studies in Japan. Iran and Japan also cooperate in the production of movies, research in archaeological areas and holding exhibitions and events in each other's countries.

**Tourism**

Travel to Iran is a unique experience of being in the cradle of a civilization and culture. With the hospitality, compassion and generosity of its people and a safe environment, the number of tourists to my country has been expanding during recent years. I am also particularly pleased to notice

the expansion of travel by the noble people of Japan to my country. I am certain that these exchanges will contribute to further understanding and friendship between our two great nations.

During the tenure of my mission to Japan, I have been asked many times to introduce places of interest in my country. I would like to use this opportunity to introduce some interesting places, from a collection of wonderful sights in Iran.

The most famous tourist places of interest in my country are Persepolis, Pasargadae, Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, Kashan, Hamedan and the Caspian Sea area. I am sure travelers will have a wonderful time visiting Iran. At the embassy in Tokyo we are ready to provide more information to facilitate visits.



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## Home to many historic sites

Below are some of the popular tourist attractions in Iran.

**Isfahan**

Isfahan probably is one of the few Iranian cities that is closest to a tourist's expectations of a Persian town. It is a monument of the Safavid period with a large number of elements that are reminiscent of the glory and splendor of the Islamic and Persian civilizations.

Situated on the slopes of mount Zagross in the center of the Iranian plateau, Isfahan is a city that was built on fertile land, which is irrigated by Zayandeh Roud (the life-giving river).

It is only a 400-km journey from the capital, less than one hour by air, and numerous flights leave Tehran and many other Iranian cities for Isfahan everyday. A road trip may be a very good opportunity to find out even more about the colorful varieties of the environment in Iran.

World-famous Persian art is still present in Isfahan where there are many practicing artists in different fields of fine art working in textiles, clay, ce-

ramics, metals and tapestry. Watching a traditional artisan at his workshop can be one of the many enjoyable things visitors can do in an afternoon in Isfahan. On the other hand, a walk anywhere in the town is like visiting a living museum.

Highlights of that living museum can be visited at Maidan-e Naghsh-e Jahan where there is an abundance of examples of Safavid period Persian architecture, including the Sheik Lotfollah Mosque, the Imam Mosque, the Ali-Qapu and the main gate to the bazaar. All this is located in the vicinity of the Chehel Sotun (forty pillars) palace. Elsewhere in the town, but not too far from Naghsh-e Jahan, are places like the Jami Mosque, and several ancient bridges that cross Zayandeh Roud. There is also much more to see on a peaceful walk on Avenue Chahar Bagh.

**Persepolis**

Darius the Great founded the magnificent palace complex at Persepolis around 518 B.C., although more than a century passed before it was finally completed. Conceived

to be the seat of government for the Achaemenian kings and a center for receptions and ceremonial festivities, the wealth of the Persian Empire was evident in all aspects of its construction. The splendor of Persepolis, however, was short-lived as the palaces were looted and burned by Alexander the Great in 331-330 B.C.

**Passargadae**

Passargadae is the first capital of the Achaemenian empire, situated 130 km to the northeast of Shiraz and less than 50 km from Persepolis.

There is a building there that is generally agreed to be the tomb of Cyrus that was built (546 B.C.) during his lifetime. This 12-m high imposing stepped tomb of Cyrus, symbolizing in its somber linearity the simplicity and greatness that made the man a potential world conqueror, dominates Passargadae. It consists of a small chamber borne by a basement of six levels which diminish upwards, so as to form steps. The tomb is entirely built of megalithic stone.

**Shiraz**

Shiraz is located 895 km away from Tehran. This engaging and beautiful city, near the greatest and most famous magnificent capital of the ancient East, Persepolis, has been, since the fall of the Achaemenian and Sassanids empires, the heir and conservator of the culture and civilization of ancient Iran. It has also been the birthplace and residence of many illustrious and eminent men of learning, art, philosophy and mysticism, each of whom had a large share in maintaining the ancient culture and art, customs and traditions of Iran, to a greater extent than the historians after Islam have recorded.

Shiraz, the patron of learning and art, has brought many



Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque of Naghsh-e Jahan Square, Isfahan EMBASSY OF IRAN

famous scholars, physicians, painters, orators, calligraphists, architects and artists to the world of knowledge and art, and each one of them, in their own specialty, has shone and scintillated in the world of knowledge, literature and art. The wonderful and enduring productions of the craftsmen and artists of Shiraz, during past centuries are abundant in other parts of Iran and outside of the country. They all demonstrate the proficiency, mastery, skill and excellent taste of the artists of this region.

The fame of Shiraz mostly rests on the possession of distinguished erudite, literary personalities. And Shiraz, be-

sides fostering such able sons as Sa'adi, Hafez and Molla Sadra, has nurtured hundreds of philosophers, mathematicians, physicians, astronomers, painters, illuminators (of manuscripts) and calligraphists, each one of whom in his own craft has been like a guide lighting the way to learning and knowledge.

Shiraz, the home of Persian poetry, the city of roses and nightingales, spreads out like an immense garden on a green plain at the foot of Tang Allah-o-Akbar. The ninth century A.D. saw the development of Shiraz, the pace increased during the 10th century, when the town was promoted to the status of capital of Persia. During the period of Attabakan-e Fars dynasty (12th and 13th centuries) and continuing through the 14th century, Shiraz was one of the largest and most populous Islamic cities.

Karim Khan Zand (18th century), the righteous king, promoted Shiraz once more to become the capital of the em-



Top: Nasir of Molk Mosque in Shiraz; Bottom: Jameh Mosque of Yazd EMBASSY OF IRAN

pire, contributing greatly to its prosperity by building mosques, bazaars, roads, citadels and other structures. Today, the famous Shiraz University, the large Namazee Hospital and the Nurse's Training college, various modern plants and the flourishing agriculture of environs of Shiraz contribute toward making this city of more than 1 million a place of considerable standing and prosperity.

Shiraz has an agreeable climate, hospitable people and

during Nowruz (the Iranian New Year which coincides with the commencement of spring), the city becomes a field of flowers and greenery, heady with the scent of orange blossoms. All these attractions draw large numbers of both Iranian and foreign visitors throughout the year, particularly in spring, to the city of roses and nightingales.

**Yazd**

The city of Yazd's first mention in historic records date it

to around 3,000 years B.C. when it was referred to by the name of Ysatis, and was then part of the domain of Medes, an ancient settler of Iran. In the course of history, due to its distance from important capitals and its harsh natural surrounding, Yazd remained immune to major troop movements and destruction from wars; therefore keeping many of its traditions, city features and architecture until modern times.

During the invasion of Genghis Khan in early 1,200 A.D. Yazd became a safe haven and home for many artists, intellectuals and scientists fleeing their war-ravaged cities around Persia. Marco Polo visited Yazd in 1272, and he described it as a good and noble city and remarked on its silk production. Isolated from easy approach by a huge tract of monotonous desert, the vibrancy of Yazd is invariably a surprise.

The city of Yazd is located in the eastern part of central Iran situated on the high, desert plateau that forms much of the country. Amid the immense desert, Yazd retains its ancient atmosphere in religion, traditions and architecture. Recognized by UNESCO Yazd is home to some of the oldest architecture in the world.

## Expanding bilateral economic ties

**Masahiko Komura**

CHAIRMAN OF JAPAN-IRAN PARLIAMENTARIANS' FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



On the occasion of 37th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of Iran on behalf of the members of Japan-Iran Parliamentarians' Friendship League.

Fortunately, the talks between Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, the U.K., the U.S., Russia and Germany) reached a final agreement, paving the way for expansion of economic and trade cooperation between Japan and Iran. Considering this auspicious outcome, my colleagues in the Japan-Iran Parliamentarians' Friendship League are determined to enhance our efforts to further boost and deepen Japan-Iran relations in all areas.

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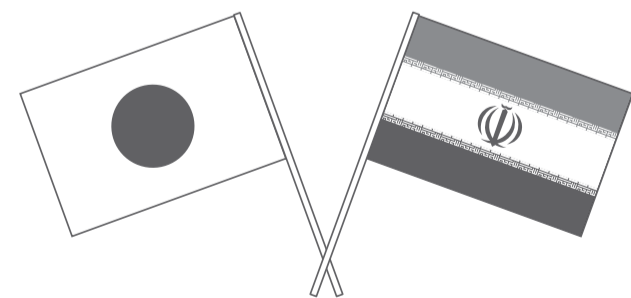
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to the People of  
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on the 37th Anniversary of  
Their Islamic Revolution Day



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Gate of All Nations in the ancient city of Persepolis EMBASSY OF IRAN

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