

# Turkey National Day Special

## Age-old partnership continues to flourish

**HASAN MURAT MERCAN**  
AMBASSADOR OF TURKEY



It is a great pleasure for me to address The Japan Times readers on the occasion of the 96th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey. I would like to take this opportunity to present my congratulations to the Turkish community in Japan and my warmest greetings to our Japanese friends.

The Turkish nation under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk gained victory in its struggle for ending foreign occupation after World War I, and 95 years ago, on this very day, proclaimed the Republic of Turkey. After more than nine decades, Turkey has evolved into a regional power with a constitutional democracy governed by a presidential government system, a rapidly developing member of the global community and a dynamic, growing, free market economy driven by a talented and creative young population.

Turkey follows a foreign policy based on the principle of "Peace at Home, Peace in the World." In this regard, Turkey pursues a humanitarian foreign policy, which has a global perspective encompassing the regions and partners around her.

Turkey, located in an area where the impact of global changes is the greatest, aims to help secure a stable, prosperous and cooperative international environment. In addition to that, Turkey is also taking a leading position in addressing the humanitarian crises in our region and beyond. We are not only providing a haven for more than 3.5 million Syrians, but also reaching out to deliver humanitarian assistance.

We have historical and strong bonds in Turkish-Japanese relations. The origins of our friendship with Japan go back to the 19th century, when the Imperial Ottoman frigate Ertugrul sank off the coast of the town of Kushimoto in 1890. Since then, the selfless sacrifices of the people of Kushimoto for saving our sailors have been engraved

deep in the hearts of the Turkish people. Since then, the spirit of solidarity and cooperation between the two countries has constantly progressed. Next year we will commemorate the 130th anniversary of this tragic event, which we see as the foundation of our friendship, even today.

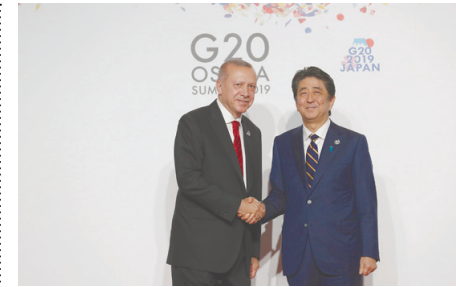
Turkey and Japan enjoy excellent political relations with close dialogue and cooperation. We elevated our ties to strategic partnership level as agreed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his visit to Turkey in 2013. It is my firm conviction that our relations will further strengthen with high level visits expected to take place next year.

Economic relations continue to be one of the main pillars of Turkish-Japanese

relations. Negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreement have entered the final phase and we are determined to finalize it by the end of this year. Once finalized, this agreement will provide investors with clear guidelines and a more secure operating environment.

On the cultural front, we declared 2019 as "Turkish Culture Year in Japan" and committed ourselves to introducing Turkish culture to the wider Japanese public. We have organized various cultural events for that purpose throughout the year.

The centerpiece of these events was "The Treasures and the Tradition of 'Lale' in the Ottoman Empire" exhibition that was launched at The National Art Center, Tokyo and The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto. More than 170 historical artifacts,



mainly from Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, were displayed during this exhibition. More than 200,000 visitors found the opportunity to enjoy some of the most precious and symbolically important items of the Topkapi Palace Museum, including the throne of Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II, Japanese vases as well as presents from the emperor of



Far left: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during the G20 summit held in Osaka on June 28. Left: Gobekli Tepe, an archaeological site in southeastern Turkey, became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2018. TURKISH EMBASSY, REPUBLIC OF TURKEY MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

Japan to the Ottoman Sultan that reflected the historical bonds between Turkey and Japan.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the government of Japan, the Japan-Turkey Friendship Society, the Tokyo Japanese-Turkish Women's Club and

friendship societies all over Japan for their contribution to the impeccable cooperation between the two countries. Our thanks also go to The Japan Times, whose generous support we have always received.

With these thoughts in mind, I would like to extend, once again to The Japan Times readers, our most heartfelt greetings.

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

Congratulations  
to the People  
of  
Turkey  
on the Occasion  
of Their Republic Day

**JT**

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Congratulations  
on the Occasion of  
the Anniversary of  
the Proclamation of  
the Republic of Turkey

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