

# Pakistan National Day Special

## A special relationship forged by history

**IMTIAZ AHMAD**  
AMBASSADOR OF PAKISTAN

On this auspicious occasion of the National Day of Pakistan, let me express on behalf of the government of Pakistan, myself and my compatriots in Japan, our respectful and sincere greetings to Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress, members of the Imperial family, H.E. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and the government and the friendly people of Japan.

Every year, we celebrate the national



day of Pakistan to commemorate the historic day of March 23, 1940, when our founding fathers clearly laid out the vision for a separate and independent state for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. That vision became a reality on Aug. 14, 1947, owing to the relentless efforts by our elders led by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Pakistan and Japan are long-standing friends and share a special bond based on deep-rooted linkages that go far in history and time. The people of Pakistan carry a deep sentiment of warmth and affection for Japan and the Japanese people. We have always stood with each other in times of need, calamity and natural disasters.

2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake that struck the Tohoku region. It was a great tragedy resulting in the loss of precious lives. The Pakistani community living in Japan ren-

dered their services to help the affected people in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami. Indeed, all this makes us very proud.

On this cherished day, we pledge to take the Pakistan-Japan bilateral relationship to further heights in the new Japanese era of Reiwa. Thank you! Long Live Pakistan! Long Live the Pakistan-Japan Friendship.

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



Mulla Ki Basti, a popular place to camp in the northern Mansehra District FAKHR ALAM



Khaplu Palace, a fort in eastern Gilgit-Baltistan MAHNOOR SAGHIR



The Indus River near Skardu in Gilgit-Baltistan QAMMER WAZIR

## A celebration of strong reciprocal ties

**SEISHIRO ETO**  
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-PAKISTAN  
PARLIAMENTARIANS FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



On behalf of the Japan-Pakistan Parliamentarians Friendship League, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the auspicious occasion of Pakistan Day.

Japan and Pakistan have been enjoying exchanges in various fields, including politics, economy, culture and academia since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1952. Although in the past year mutual visits between the countries were largely restricted due to the worldwide fight

against the spread of COVID-19, there was active communication between Japan and Pakistan, such as telephone discussions between Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and his Pakistan counterpart Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, as well as between Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono and Pakistan Army Chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa. These talks confirmed the existence of friendly and strong bilateral relations even amid the coronavirus catastrophe. Last February, the Maritime Self-Defense Force participated in the Pakistan Navy's Multinational Maritime Exercise Aman-21 with over 40 other countries, which led to the advancement of defense exchanges between Japan and Pakistan.

As both countries are still working continuously to bring the spread of COVID-19 to a rapid halt, I hope we will share our knowledge and experience with each other to solve this issue. Japan has been providing related assistance to Pakistan, such

as medical equipment, to strengthen the country's medical systems. On the other hand, the government of Pakistan and Pakistan International Airlines provided kind cooperation for 110 Japanese nationals who had been residing in Pakistan and wished to return to Japan amid the globally spreading contagion so they could safely return to Japan last April.

Japan and Pakistan will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations next year. As the president of the Japan-Pakistan Parliamentarians Friendship League, I pray that both of our countries will celebrate an early victory in the fight against COVID-19 and would like to further strengthen bilateral relations, looking ahead to the post-corona era.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes for the continued prosperity of Pakistan and the further development of friendly relations between Japan and Pakistan.

## Toward greater commerce and prosperity

**TERUO ASADA**  
CHAIRMAN, THE JAPAN-PAKISTAN  
BUSINESS COOPERATION COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Japan-Pakistan Business Cooperation Committee (JPBCC), I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the auspicious occasion of Pakistan Day.

Under the leadership of Imran Khan's Cabinet, investors' expectations for economic reform have risen substantially. With increasing business momentum



in Pakistan and a population surpassing 200 million, the pace of market penetration by Japanese companies is expected to accelerate. I am convinced that more will enter Pakistan's market

once the COVID-19 pandemic has been contained.

The JPBCC was established in 1984. Since then, we have been promoting bilateral

business ties, trade, investment and economic activities.

In October 2019, the JPBCC held a round-table talk with His Excellency Dr. Arif Alvi, president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where the attendees had thorough, valuable discussions. The JPBCC hopes to contribute to the further development of business between our countries through such activities.

I conclude by once again offering my congratulations on Pakistan Day, as well as my sincere wishes for Pakistan's increasing development and prosperity in the future.



A Pakistani woman from the Gilgit-Baltistan region wears a traditional dress. ASMAR HUSSAIN

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
on the Occasion of  
the Anniversary of  
their National Day

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## Tourism on the rise as foreign businesses profit

There is a popular legend among Japanese backpackers that the landscapes in "Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind," a 1984 anime by Hayao Miyazaki, were modeled on the Hunza Valley of Pakistan. Although it's difficult to ascertain the source of the story, its references can be found in travel guides and social media posts.

On Japanese social media I've found many posts on Pakistan's food, gemstones, northern areas and the daily flag-lowering ceremony at the Wagah border. Every day I see content and vlogs on Pakistan popping up all over the web, highlighting Japan's growing interest. This is a promising trend, especially when access has become easy. Japanese can now apply online for visas and often get them in a week.

Pakistan has seen a 70% increase in international tourist arrivals over the past three years. In 2019, Forbes, the British Backpacker Society and Conde Nast named it a top tourist destination. Whereas interest in tourism is growing, trade has always been a major area of focus between Pakistan and Japan. Both

countries started as trading partners, particularly in cotton and textiles, in the 1950s. Japan was dependent on raw cotton imports from Pakistan and Japanese spindles played a crucial role in developing Pakistan's textile industry.

Today, Pakistan offers an open and deregulated market with 100% equity ownership and 100% repatriation of capital and dividends. Our IT sector is brimming with talent. In the past five years IT export remittances have grown 151% for a compound annual rate of 20%, the highest in the region. Therefore many Japanese IT firms have shown interest in hiring IT experts from Pakistan.

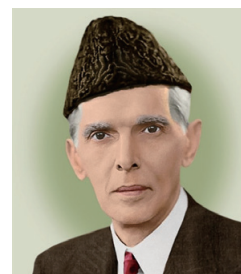
From 2007 to 2017, leading multinational corporations like Unilever, GSK, Nestle, Colgate-Palmolive and Telenor have consistently made astronomically high profits in Pakistan as compared with their global averages. Therefore, Japanese companies also consider Pakistan one of the most profitable international destinations as we see growing interest in the energy, minerals, infrastructure, pharmaceutical, seafood and dairy sectors.

The outreach campaign Option Pakistan launched by the Pakistan Embassy in Tokyo has attracted a lot of attention from major business chambers and associations in Japan, and we are moving ahead to the matchmaking stage in collaboration with partners in both countries.

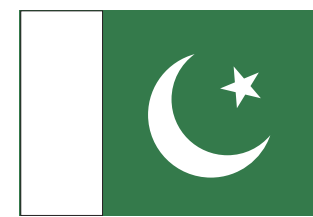
To leverage its geographic location, Pakistan is actively pursuing regional connectivity projects that also provide Japanese firms great opportunities for investment and partnerships.

On defense and security, Pakistan and Japan have active coordination and cooperation in maritime security in the North Arabian Sea. The navies of both frequently hold joint training involving humanitarian aid, disaster relief and anti-piracy operations. Last month, Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force participated in one of the largest multilateral maritime cooperative engagements in the Arabian Sea — the Exercise Aman (Peace), which was hosted by the Pakistan Navy.

Muhammad Farrukh Rafiq, Press Counselor, Embassy of Pakistan, Tokyo



The founder of Pakistan  
Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah



23RD MARCH



Prime Minister of Pakistan  
Imran Khan

**THIS DAY**  
**WE CELEBRATE**  
**THE ANNIVERSARY**  
**OF OUR NATIONAL DAY**

with renewed vigour and hope to build up a happy, prosperous and progressive future for our country and leave behind a rich legacy of achievements for our future generations to feel proud of.

NBP will continue to play its role in promoting the national effort for all-round development.

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