

# Anniversary of Birth of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

THE Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." (Article 1 of the Constitution).

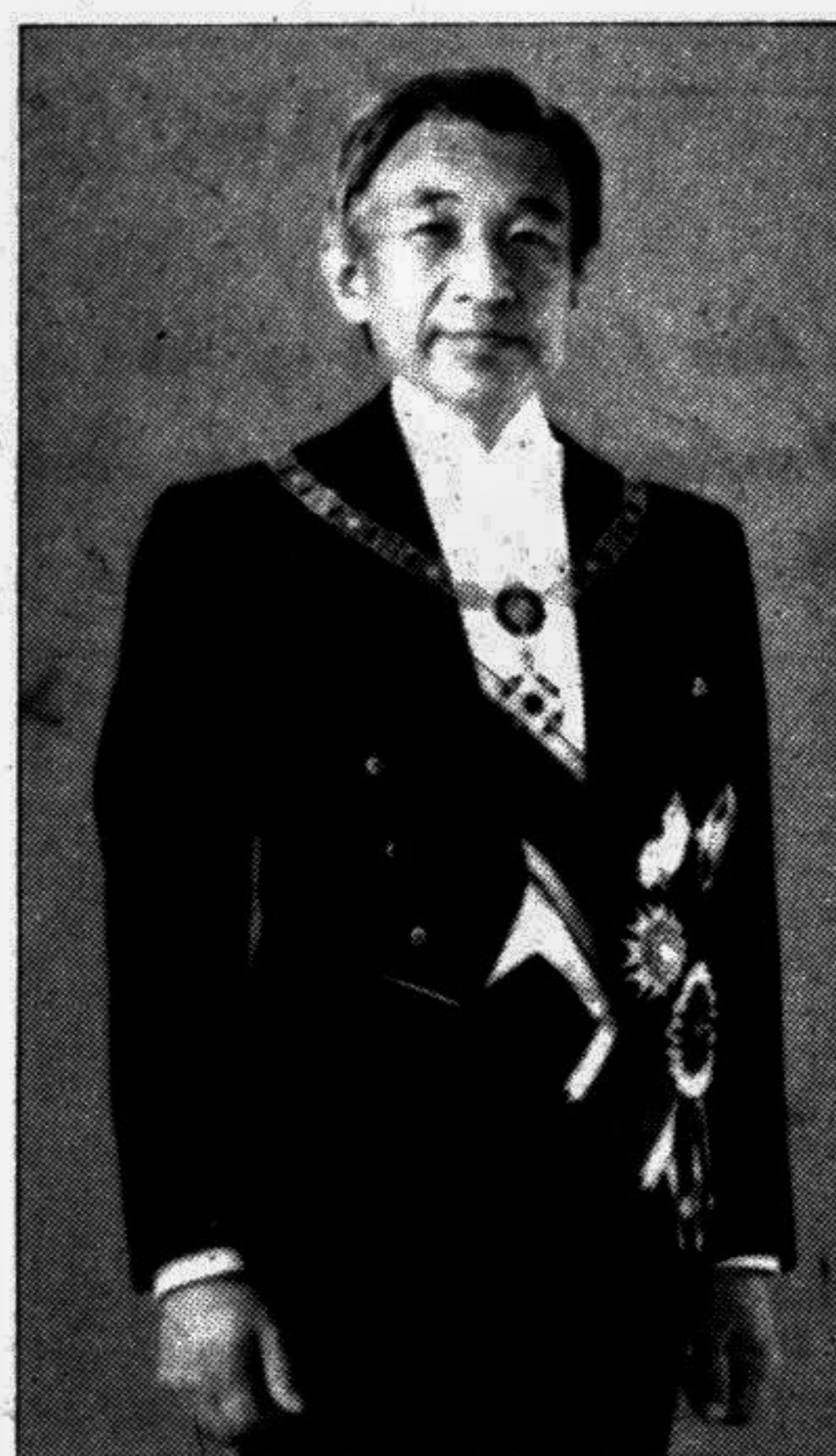
"The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government." (Article 4) The Emperor appoints the Prime Minister as designated by the Diet and the Chief Judge of the Supreme Court as designated by the Cabinet. (Article 6) With the advice and approval of the Cabinet, he performs such acts in matters of state as the promulgation of laws and treaties, convocation of the Diet, proclamation of general elections, awarding of honors, etc. (Article 7).

## The Emperor and Empress

His Majesty Emperor Akihito, who acceded to the throne on January 7, 1989, upon the death of Emperor Hirohito (posthumously Emperor Showa), was born in Tokyo on December 23, 1933. He is the eldest son of the Emperor Showa and Empress Dowager Nagako. Following his graduation from Gakushuin Senior High School in 1952, he studied at the Department of Politics in the Faculty of Politics and Economics of Gakushuin University until 1956. In addition, he received private lectures on a number of subjects by eminent professionals, including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

In 1953 the Emperor (then Crown Prince Akihito) made a six-month tour of 14 countries in North America and Western Europe. The tour centered around his visit to London as Emperor Showa's representative at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

In April 1959 the Emperor married Michiko Shoda, the eldest daughter of Hidesaburo Shoda, former president of a flour-manufacturing company. She was born in Tokyo on October 20, 1934. The Shodas are a scholarly family that has produced two recipients of the Order of Cultural Merit, the highest academic honour conferred by the Emperor upon distinguished scholars. In 1953 she entered the University of the Sacred Heart, specializing in English literature in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. At her graduation ceremony, she was valedictorian of her class.



His Majesty Emperor Akihito



Her Majesty Empress Michiko

## The Imperial Family

The Imperial Household Council, headed by the Prime Minister and composed of representatives of the imperial family, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the House of Councillors, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and others, gave their unanimous consent to the marriage, which was warmly welcomed by the nation.

Since their marriage, Their Majesties have paid official visits to 43 countries at the invitation of their governments. They have enjoyed listening to talks and reports, or having discussions with scholars, artists, and other experts in various fields as well as young people, such as the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. Their Majesties also have attended various national and international ceremonies and meetings held in Tokyo and other parts of the country. In addition, they made it a rule to travel out of the capital several times a year to observe local affairs and to come into direct contact with all sorts of people in various parts of the country. They often visited social welfare institutions, industrial establishments, and academic institutes; they also at-

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The Imperial Family

tended various art exhibitions and charity concerts. In September 1987 the then Crown Prince took over the duties of the failing Emperor Showa, which included the opening of the Diet and, with the future Empress Michiko, attending the autumn session of the National Sports Festival, National Arbor Day, and other such functions.

Holding his first audience for representatives of the people two days after ascending the throne, the Emperor vowed to fulfill his responsibilities. "I pledge I will always be at one with the people and uphold the Constitution," he said. The Emperor indicated he will follow the footsteps of his father and keep in mind the late Emperor's wish to be with the people. Expressing his hopes for further progress in the nation's fortune, world peace, and the welfare of mankind, the Emperor indicated he will adhere to his status as the symbol of the people's unity, as provided by the Constitution.

His Majesty is interested in the study of fish and has published 26 papers on gobies in the Japanese Journal of Ichthyology. In 1986 he was elected an honorary member of the Linnean Society of London, an international biological society. He is also interested in history. Among sports, he plays tennis most often. He also greatly enjoys riding.

Her Majesty enjoys playing the piano and harp, as well as doing embroidery, weaving, and other handicrafts. She is also known for her love of literature and flowers. Her favourite sport is tennis. Their Majesties first became acquainted on the tennis court.

Their Majesties have two sons and a daughter. In spite of their busy lives with many official duties, they raised their children on their own, a departure from imperial tradition. They have tried to spend as much time as possible with their family in order to maintain close ties. Their constant visits to the Imperial Palace

together with their children gave Emperor Showa and the Empress Dowager much joy.

## Emperor Showa and the Empress Dowager

Emperor Showa has been born in Tokyo on April 29, 1901, and died on January 7, 1989. He reigned just over 62 years after ascending to the throne on December 25, 1926. His life of 87 years and eight months made him Japan's longest-living emperor. He was also the longest-reigning emperor in Japanese history.

Her Majesty the Empress Dowager Nagako, the eldest daughter of the late Prince Kuni, was born in Tokyo on March 6, 1903. She studied at Gakushuin Girls' School. She is very fond of music and Japanese-style painting and is considered an accomplished artist in both fields. She also enjoys composing poetry and practicing calligraphy.

After her marriage in January 1924, she carried out her duties as Empress until the last year of Emperor Showa's life. Since January 1987 she no longer attends official occasions for reasons of health. At a press conference on the occasion of the 60th year of his reign, the Emperor Showa said of the Empress-Dowager that he had shared joys and sorrows with her.

## The Crown Prince and Crown Princess

His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito (also known as Prince Hiro), the eldest son of Their Majesties, was born in Tokyo on February

## Ambassador's Message

On the occasion of His Majesty Emperor Akihito's sixty-first birthday, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude towards the well-wishers in Bangladesh on behalf of the Government of Japan.

The visit of Her Excellency Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to Japan in March this year was a symbolic as well as memorable event which strengthened further the long-term friendly bonds between our two countries. This successful visit reflected the sincere wishes of the two peoples for closer cooperation in the future. Besides this event there have been a number of cooperative and joint efforts, not only in economic fields but also in political, diplomatic and cultural fields as well, and I am certain that our bilateral relationship will continue to flourish in years to come.

In the field of economic cooperation, Bangladesh has been one of the major recipients of Japan's economic assistance since its independence and in 1993 ranked eighth among the recipient countries of Japan's official development assistance. Japan has been the largest bilateral donor to Bangladesh in most of the years since 1986; in the Japanese fiscal year 1993, Japan's grant aid totalled approximately 193 million US dollars, technical cooperation 18 million and loan aid 230 million.

This year we were able to celebrate two major occasions which will hopefully be remembered for long by the people of Bangladesh as major landmarks of our economic cooperation. One is the signing of the agreement in March on the construction of the Jamuna Bridge. I am very pleased that this project, which has been the long-time dream of the people of the Bangladesh, was finally initiated under the co-financing arrangement with Japan together with two international lending institutions.

The other event is the opening of the Meghna-Gumti Bridge, for which a ceremony was held at the site on November 1, in the presence of many high-level dignitaries from both countries, including Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia and Honourable Mr Hiroshi Mitsuoka, president of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians Association. The opening of the Meghna-Gumti Bridge, together with the Meghna Bridge, which was also completed in 1990 under Japanese grant assistance, has eliminated the time-consuming ferry crossing points in the country's most important highway, reducing the transportation time between Dhaka and Chittagong by about two hours. I feel confident that the two bridges will contribute greatly to rapid economic development of this country's southeastern belt.

Now I would like to refer to Japan's role in promotion of foreign investment in Bangladesh. The amount of Japanese investment approved by the Export Processing Zone Authority currently stands at about 40 million US dollars. In Chittagong, thirteen Japanese companies are operating in the EPZ, producing optical lenses, textiles, pilot lamps, fishing rods and golf shafts. Regarding Japanese investment outside the EPZs, 190 million taka have been approved by the Board of Investment as of the end of the fiscal year 1993/94, excluding the Japanese investment to the KAFCO project.

In June this year, a high-powered Japanese economic mission of "Keidanren" visited Bangladesh for a close examination of the investment climate in Bangladesh to follow up on the official visit of the Prime Minister. It is the business people in the private sector in Japan, not the Japanese government, that make decisions on investment. Therefore, future Japanese investment depends upon how far the Bangladesh side is willing to go to attract Japanese investors. Now is a good time to pre-

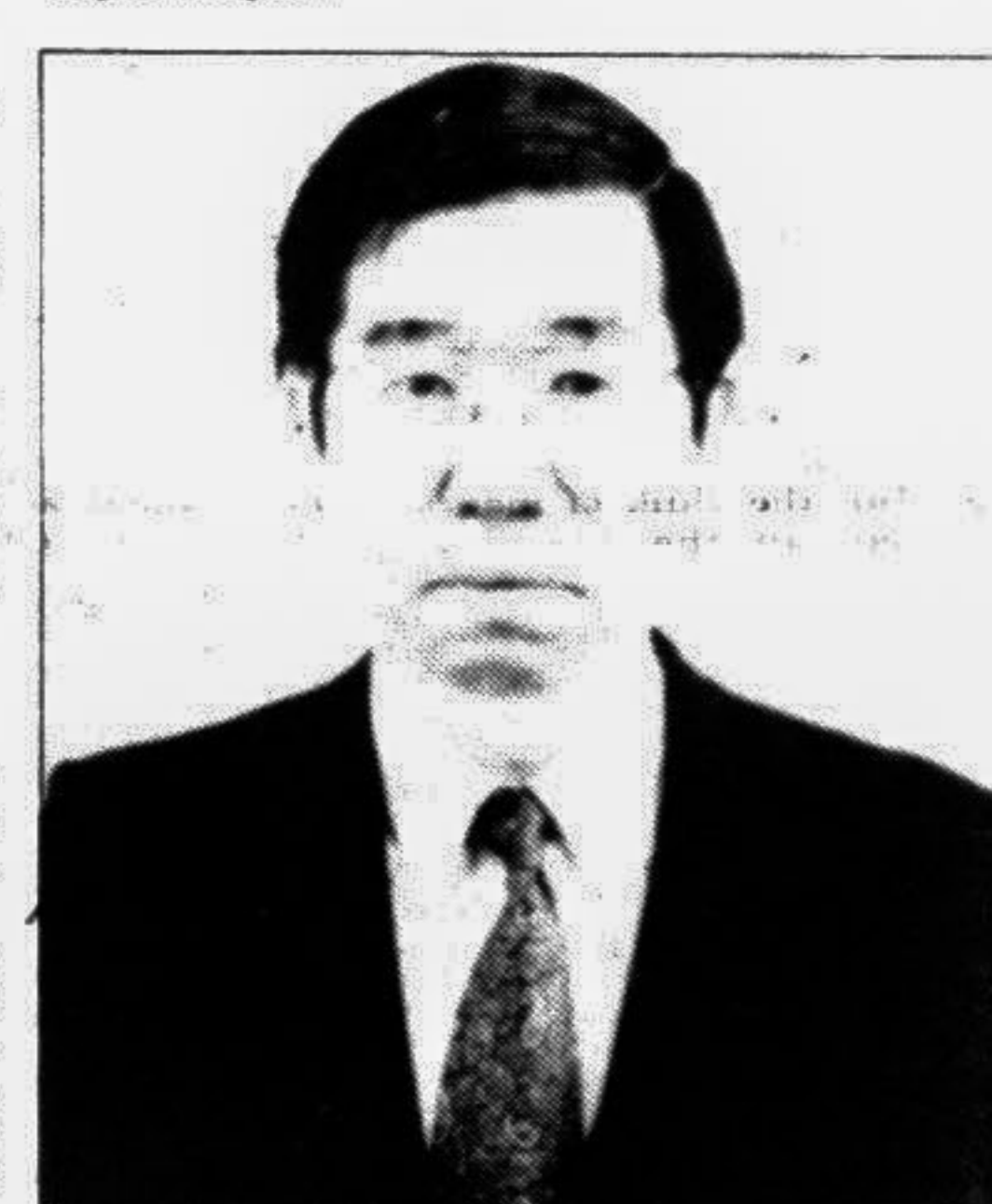
pare for the future when the Japanese economy will fully recover from the longest recession since 1945. I hope that the investment climate will improve in Bangladesh and many more Japanese will find it attractive to invest in Bangladesh.

I would also like to emphasize that the relationship between Japan and Bangladesh consists not only of economic cooperation and investment, but also of cooperation in the cultural field. Cultural exchanges are undoubtedly a significant fact of our bilateral relationship since they provide opportunities to learn each other's traditions, values and lifestyles, which consequently contribute to a closer, friendly relationship based on the mutual appreciation of culture.

In the last one year, our embassy sponsored jointly with various Bangladeshi cultural organizations a Japanese film festival, a symposium on Oshin, tea ceremony and flower arrangement demonstrations and a host of other cultural programmes. Japanese artists participated in the Asian Biennale in Dhaka with one of them winning a gold prize. A Japanese folk music and dance troupe is now in town and is about to demonstrate their performance in front of a Dhaka audience.

In addition to these cultural events, there are many individuals, particularly of the younger generation from both countries, who work or study in each other's country. In Bangladesh, more than 70 Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer workers, of whom about a half are women, are currently posted throughout the country offering their expertise and skills in many fields. In 1993, 72 Bangladeshi students received scholarships from our government to study in Japan. Japan also offers a variety of invitation programs for Bangladeshi scholars, researchers, artists, teachers, youths and others.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that continuous endeavours should be made on both sides so that we can build together a more vibrant, thriving, multi-faceted Japan-Bangladesh relationship in the future. On the special occasion of His Majesty Emperor Akihito's birthday, I would like to express my warmest thanks to the people of Bangladesh for their friendship, hospitality and cooperation which is extended to all of us from Japan.



Shigeo Takenaka  
Ambassador of Japan  
to Bangladesh

Heartiest Felicitation to  
His Majesty

THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN



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## Basic Facts on Japan's ODA

JAPAN, the second-ranking economic power in the world in terms of GNP, became the largest donor nation, according to 1993 Official Development Assistance (ODA) figures.

In the midst of global upheaval, Japan has made contributions in a variety of ways through aid for efforts to promote democratization and regional stability in developing countries. In response to changes in the international community, the demand for aid is expanding and diversifying. Accompanying these trends, expectations of Japan's contributions are reaching new levels.

In light of these circumstances, in June 1992 Japan announced its ODA Charter, which clearly outlines the philosophy, principles and policies of Japan's aid. In the future, on the basis of the ODA Charter, Japan intends to expand and qualitatively improve its aid, as well as to implement it more effectively and efficiently.

What kinds of conditions currently exist in developing countries?

Widening gap between the North and the South

There are approximately 160 developing countries in the world. Approximately 76% of the total world population, or 4.2 billion of the world's 5.5 billion people, live in these countries. However, the total gross national product (GNP) of developing countries is less than 15% of the world's total. The socio-economic gap be-

tween advanced industrial nations and developing nations, far from shrinking, is becoming even wider. Excluding the newly industrializing economies (NIEs) of Asia and some oil-producing developing countries, most developing countries are faced with difficult problems such as sluggish economic growth, accumulating debt, growing international trade deficits and increasing levels of poverty.

How to escape the vicious circle?

The main problems borne by developing countries are not all economically related. There are other issues such as high population growth rates, famine and malnutrition, short life expectancies and environmental problems. The population problem is particularly serious. In 1991, the gross domestic product (GDP) for all developing countries grew at a rate of 1.9% over the previous year. However, because of the high rate of population increase, real growth per capita decreased to negative 0.2%.

This is the result of a vicious circle. Poverty and under-realized socio-economic development cause an increase in population. The sudden increase in population, in turn, impedes socio-economic development and accelerates the spread of poverty.

In this connection, there is still a lack of health, hygiene, water supply, education and other so-called basic human needs (BHN) in developing countries. Furthermore, these countries are behind in terms of transportation, telecommunications, energy, industry and other aspects of infrastructure that are fundamental for development.

It goes without saying that in order to escape this vicious circle, the development efforts

made by these countries themselves are important. At the same time, it is necessary for Japan and other advanced countries to support those efforts.

What is the basic idea behind Japan's aid?

Basic philosophy of Japan's ODA

On 30 June 1992, the Cabinet Meeting decided Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) Charter, which expresses its long-term comprehensive aid policy. The basis of Japan's aid is described in the ODA Charter as being support for the self-help efforts of developing countries seeking economic growth, based on the philosophy of humanitarian considerations, recognition of the interdependence of the international community and environmental conservation.

In other words, from a humanitarian perspective, we cannot ignore the fact that large numbers of people from most of the world's developing countries are suffering from famine and poverty.

The philosophy of recognizing our interdependence in international society is based on the idea that Japan's aid not only is useful for the development of developing countries, but is also indispensable for worldwide peace and prosperity.

The philosophy of environmental conservation is based on the idea that Japan's aid fulfills a major role in grappling with problems of global proportions which ought to be jointly addressed by advanced countries and developing countries.

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