

Anniversary of Birth of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

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MESSAGE

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the people of Bangladesh who join to celebrate His Majesty Emperor Akihito's sixty-fifth birthday. The friendly relations which have been maintained between Bangladesh and Japan for the last 26 years are now more solid than ever before. The highlight of this amicable relationship was the opening of the Bangabandhu Bridge earlier this year, construction of which was co-financed by Japan, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. It was my honour to convey the sincere congratulatory message from the former Prime Minister Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto on the occasion of the inauguration ceremony on June 23. Mr Hashimoto regarded the completion of the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge as a great need and the earnest wish of the people and the Government of Bangladesh for unifying the eastern and western regions of the country and I believe that this completed project will produce an immeasurable effect on the growth of the Bangladesh economy in the long years to come.

Following the memorable visit by Prime Minister Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina Wajed to Japan last year, H E Mr Abdus Samad Azad, Minister for Foreign Affairs paid an official visit to Japan in November this year at the invitation of the Government of Japan. During his six-day visit, H E Mr Abdus Samad Azad called on Japanese Prime Minister Mr Keizo Obuchi, and officially met with his counterpart, Mr Masahiko Komura, Japanese Foreign Minister, to discuss our bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues in a cordial atmosphere. Both Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their intentions to strengthen the existing close relationship by further cooperating in various fields between Dhaka and Tokyo.

I should like to extend my deepest sympathy for the heavy loss of lives and properties caused by this year's severe floods. I firmly believe that the whole nation will successfully get over the difficulties, recover economically, and reconstruct the homeland. In the wake of the longest floods in Bangladesh's history, the Government of Japan immediately decided to provide assistance by not only sending medicine and medical goods, but also dispatching a Japanese disaster relief team to Chandpur to prevent epidemics. The total emergency aid given by our government amounted for approximately US\$1.3 million. In addition, Japanese food assistance of US\$9.8 million in total was extended through the World Food Programme for the purchase of rice. At present the Government of Japan is considering further cooperation such as a rehabilitation programme for the flood affected infrastructure. As our assistance to NGOs in Bangladesh has increased this year, substantial fund was also provided to NGOs for the relief and rehabilitation programmes for the flood victims.

I would like to further touch on one example of the Japanese initiatives at grass roots level. A Japanese traditional dance school "KAWAFUJI RYU" has donated for the reconstruction of Raghunathpur high school in Feni district, which was totally burnt in a fire accident in February 1997. My wife, the head master of the school, has took the initiative to order hundreds of "Nakshi Kantha" cotton bags with an embroidery monogram of "KAWAFUJI School" on them and sold them to her disciples in order to collect fund for the new school building.

In the field of development assistance, Japan, over the past years, has emerged as one of the largest Official Development Assistance (ODA) providers in the world. It has, however, been forced to cut down the total ODA budget by 10 per cent for this fiscal year due to the recent serious economic crisis. Yet, Japan still remains as the largest bilateral donor to Bangladesh and continues its efforts to extend assistance to the areas of strategic importance which includes basic infrastructure, agriculture, rural development, human resources development, disaster prevention and fundamental human needs.

The visit of the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh to Japan also had a positive influence on the further expansion of economic activities between our two nations. Responding to the Bangladesh's interest to attract investment in small and medium scale industries, the Japan-Bangladesh Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation is currently exploring the possibilities of setting up the aforesaid sized in-

dustries in Bangladesh.

It is noteworthy that the mutual interest in the cultural and educational exchanges between our two countries is becoming greater every year. The Government of Japan, the Japan Foundation, and other organisations offer a wide range of programmes to promote awareness and understanding in this particular arena. Last November, two of the prominent scholars in Japan visited Dhaka on a lecture tour sponsored by the Japan Foundation. A seminar was organised jointly by the University of Dhaka and the Embassy of Japan where the two professors shared their views on economics and business management from the Japanese perspective and had lively discussions with their Bangladeshi counterparts. Having realised anew on that occasion the importance of first-hand communication between the nations, I would like to recommend further exchanges not only at the scholarly level but also the grass-roots level to create a solid network for our better bilateral relations.

Furthermore, I am delighted to touch upon the growing number of young people in Bangladesh taking an interest in studying in Japan and learning Japanese. The Japanese government has selected 153 Monbusho (Ministry of Education) Scholarship students from Bangladesh for FY 1997/98. It is worth mentioning that the number of institutions offering the Japanese language in Bangladesh has increased from five to ten over the past one and half years and more than 500 people are now studying the language throughout the country.

As for our public relations efforts, the Japanese Embassy organised an ODA Press Tour '98 in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) earlier this month. The main purpose of this tour was to provide members of the Bangladesh Press with an accurate idea and a chance to learn of the projects assisted by the Japanese ODA by visiting selected five projects sites. The tour attracted some twenty participating journalists from major newspapers and the TV station. I sincerely hope that those journalists are and will be contributing to the education of the nation by reporting what they gathered to every part of the country.

In closing as the ties between Bangladesh and Japan have turned into a matured and developed stage, the importance of our collaboration in such areas as political relations, economic cooperation, development assistance and cultural and educational exchange is greater than ever before. We should realise that all the countries in this world are indispensable to one another in order to build together a brighter and more peaceful future. Lastly, I would like to convey my profound appreciation and best wishes to all of those individuals and organisations in this country who have always been vital in fostering friendship and goodwill between the peoples of our two nations.



Yoshihazu Kaneko
Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh



His Majesty Emperor Akihito

Governmental Structure Changing with the Times

Separation of Powers

THE Constitution of Japan, which came into effect in 1947, is based on the principles of popular sovereignty, respect for fundamental human rights, and the advocacy of peace. Japan's political system is one of constitutional democracy. In accordance with the principle of "separation of powers," the activities of the national government are formally divided into legislative, judicial, and executive organs.

The Emperor is "the symbol of the State and unity of the people." The Emperor appoints the Prime Minister and Chief Judge of the Supreme Court as designated by the Diet, and performs "only such acts in matters of state" as provided for in the Constitution along with the advice and approval of the Cabinet, such as promulgation of amendments of the constitution, laws, cabinet orders and treaties, convocation of the Diet, dissolution of the House of Representatives, and so forth.

The Constitution of Japan proclaims a system of representative democracy in which the Diet is "the highest organ of state power." It is formally specified that the Diet, as the core of Japan's system of governance, takes precedence over the government's executive branch. The designation of the Prime Minister, who heads the executive branch, is done by resolution of the Diet. Japan practices a system of parliamentary Cabinet by which the Prime Minister appoints the majority of the Cabinet members from among members of the Diet. The Cabinet thus works in solidarity with the Diet and is responsible to it. In this respect, the system is similar to that of Great Britain, but different from that of the United States, where the 3 branches of government are theoretically on a level of perfect equality.

The Diet is divided into 2 chambers: the lower chamber, or the House of Representatives, and the upper chamber, or the House of Councillors. The House of Representatives may introduce "no-confidence motions" with respect to the Cabinet. The Cabinet, on the other hand, is able to dissolve the House of Representatives. It also has the authority to designate the Chief Judge and appoint the other judges of the Supreme Court. It is the Supreme Court that determines the constitutionality of any law or official act. The Constitution authorises the Diet to "set up an impeachment court from among the members of both Houses in order to try any judges against whom removal proceedings have been instituted."

The Diet as the Legislative Branch of Government

Japan's Diet is designated in the Constitution as "the highest organ of state power." The Diet is made up of members who are directly elected by citizens of at least 20 years of age. The political parties, to which almost all Diet members belong, are the basic units of political activity. Thus Japan is said to practice party politics. The Prime Minister is chosen by the Diet from among its members. The Prime Minister then forms a Cabinet, and the Cabinet controls the executive branch of government.

The Diet is the "sole law-making organ of the State." All legislations must follow a process leading to final approval in the Diet. The Diet has additional important functions, such as approving the national budget, ratifying international treaties, and setting in motion any formal proposals for amending the Constitution.

The Imperial Family

Status of the Emperor

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 demise of Emperor Hirohito, was born in Tokyo on December 23, 1933. He is the eldest son of the late Emperor Hirohito and the Empress Dowager Nagako. Following his graduation from Gakushuin Upper Secondary

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 months' tour of 14 countries in North America and Western Europe. The tour centered around his visit to London as His late Majesty Emperor Hirohito's representative at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

In April 1959, the Emperor married Miss Michiko Shoda, the eldest daughter of Mr Hidesaburo Shoda, former president of a flour manufacturing company. She was born in Tokyo on October 20, 1934. The Shodas are a scholarly family which has produced two recipients of the Order of Cultural Merit, the highest academic honor conferred by the Emperor upon distinguished scholars. In 1953 she entered 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. 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.

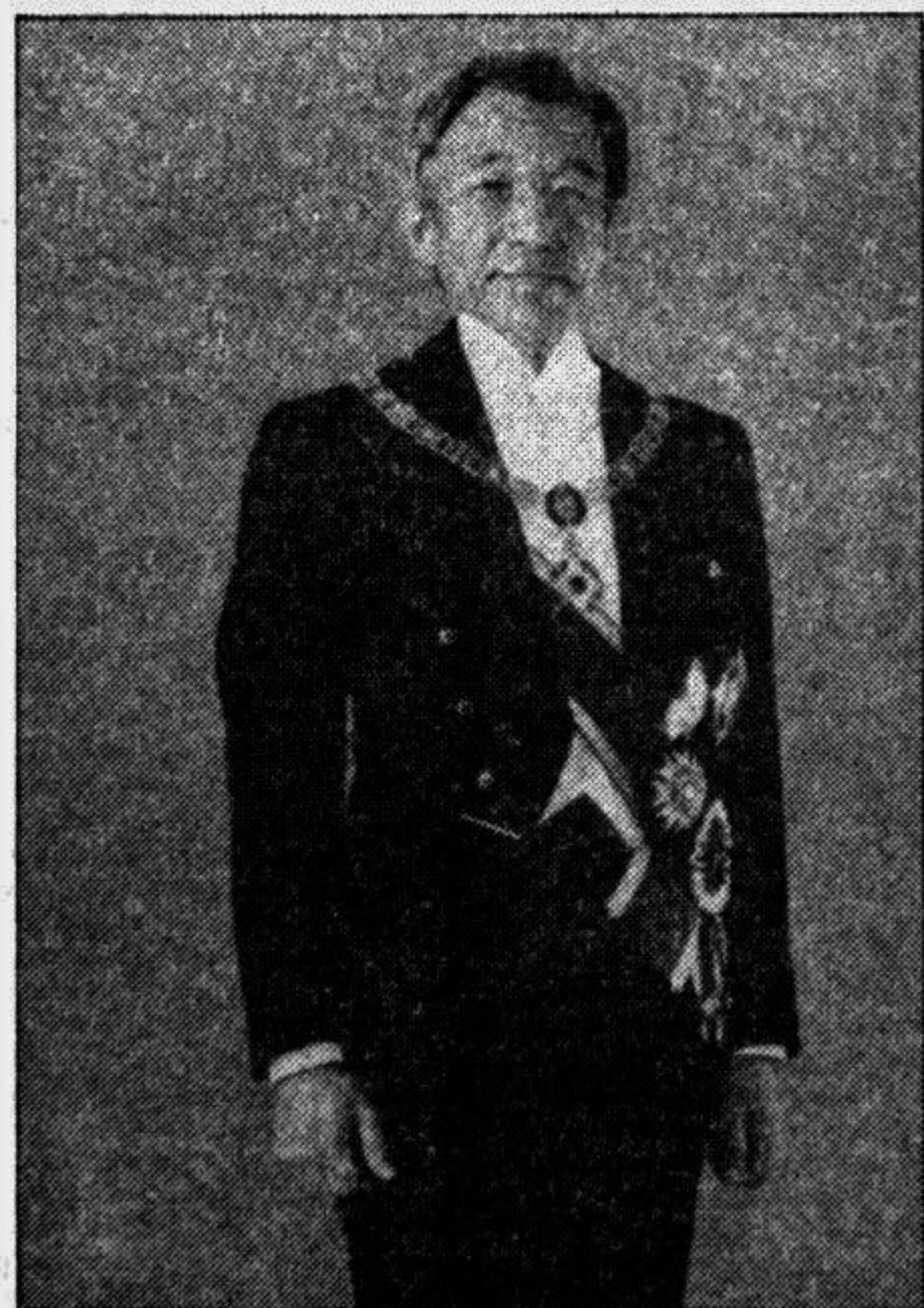
Since their marriage, Their Majesties, previously the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, have paid official visits to 37 countries at the invitation of their governments. They have enjoyed listening to talks and reports, or having discussions with scholars, artists, and other experts in various fields 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 attended various art

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The Imperial Family: from left to right are Princes Sayako, the Emperor, Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Prince Masako, the Empress, Prince and Princess Akihiro.

Heartiest Felicitations to His Royal Highness Akihito, the Emperor of Japan on the Occasion of his Birthday



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Our warmest greetings to
His Majesty Emperor Akihito
on completing 65 glorious years.



Bangladesh and Japan have shared a long and fruitful relationship which has extended over many decades. This is reflected by the large number of Japanese companies such as Nissan Motors and Fujitsu to name a few, who have set up business here.

The Pacific Group alongwith the rest of the nation extend their greetings and support to the Japanese people on this momentous occasion.



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