



76th Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE

It is my great honor and pleasure to extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to the people and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the auspicious occasion of the 76th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on 23rd December.

After Japan recognized Bangladesh on February 10th 1972, soon after its independence, warm friendship has been fostered and sustained between the citizens of two countries. Both have continued to further strengthen their relationship in all areas of cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Let us now look back on some of the major events in our relationship during the year 2009.

Diplomatic Relations

It is quite unique that during the past nearly four decades Japan and Bangladesh consistently and continuously maintained friendly and productive relation despite change of government in both countries. A year ago, Japan welcomed the fact that the General Election held in Bangladesh was carried out in a generally free, fair and peaceful manner, as announced by the Japanese Election Observation mission consisted of Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians' League and others. Then, next the then Prime Minister Mr. Taro Aso telephoned Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina and expressed his congratulations for the New Government pledging Yen Loan Assistance package of approximately 440 Million USD for electricity and bridge projects. In February, Ms. Seiko Hashimoto, then State Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Bangladesh and met Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister Mr. AMA Muhith, and Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni. In June, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Hasan Mahmud visited Japan as a special envoy to the Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina. During the visit, Dr. Mahmud paid a courtesy call on then Prime Minister Mr. Taro Aso and had meetings with

then State Secretary Ms. Hashimoto and Mr. Nobuhide Minorikawa, then Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs to exchange views on the bilateral relationship between Japan and Bangladesh.

Japan experienced having a new government headed by Prime Minister Mr. Hatoyama after his Democratic Party of Japan won at the General Election last August. Prime Minister Mr. Hatoyama addressed leaders of the world at the United Nations General Assembly last September regarding five challenges: 1) the global economic crisis, 2) climate change, 3) nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, 4) the issues of peace building, development and poverty, 5) to build an East Asian community, that Japan intends to take on in serving on a bridge for the world, between the Orient and Occident, between developed and developing countries and between diverse civilizations.

Trade and Investment

Japan and Bangladesh have enjoyed vibrant economic relationship and steady progress in trade and investment. Furthermore, both the governments are making strenuous efforts to deepen the relationship and promote investment and trade.

The number of Japanese companies, which are interested in the business with Bangladesh, is steadily increasing. Several Japanese companies have been starting their business in Bangladesh these years, which are now mainly in garment industries. In the last November, more than 50 Japanese businessmen visited Dhaka to attend two garment EXPOs, which were organized by BKMEA and BGMEA pursuing further business opportunities. Japan would be contributing to diversification of export areas of Bangladeshi garment products. In addition, one of the major telecommunication companies has been investing in the mobile market in Bangladesh.

More and more Japanese entrepreneurs are showing their interest in developing business relationship with Bangladesh. The Embassy of Japan and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) are providing business related information to both Japanese and Bangladeshi companies in order to promote trade and investment between the two countries. With the support of JETRO, Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI) held the 4th Japan Trade Fair, and 7300 people visited this three day-long EXPO, which was held in mid October in Dhaka.

The day before the Japan Trade Fair, businessmen and governmental officials of both the countries assembled together and discussed the investment and trade between the two countries at the 15th Meeting of Japan-Bangladesh Joint Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation, which was organized by the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) headed by Mr. Annisul Huq in Dhaka. In consequence of the meeting, the Embassy of Japan and a Japanese business group, Japanese Commerce & Industry Association in Dhaka (Sho-Ko-Kai) piled requests to the government of Bangladesh to promote foreign investment in the light of the further economic growth in Bangladesh.

Development Cooperation

One of the fundamental principles of Japan's development cooperation is to support the ownership and self-help efforts of Bangladesh. Japan highly appreciates the efforts of the government of Bangladesh for implementing its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) II (revised) and for achieving UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Japan will continue to support those endeavors by Bangladesh, in cooperation with other development partners.

JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), which was

strengthened by its merger with JBIC (Japan Bank for International Cooperation) last year, conducts Japan's ODA projects as an implementing agency in more efficient and effective way in Bangladesh.

Japan's major assistance might be found in strengthening of infrastructure for further economic growth, in promoting social development and in improving governance in Bangladesh. Japan's assistance on infrastructure is the most visible. Construction of mega bridges including Jamuna Bridge, Meghna Bridge and Meghna-Gumuti Bridge has driven the Bangladesh economy. Japan's assistance in power sector is also contributing to its economy. They are, for example, construction of new power plants, rehabilitation of existing power stations and strengthening of grid network.

In social development, Japan has been conducting various projects in health, education, water and sanitation and so on. Currently, more than ten of technical cooperation projects are going on including waste disposal in Dhaka, water supply in Chittagong, mother and child health care in Narsingdi, primary education in science/math and water quality testing. In addition, in view of the importance of human development, Japan puts a high priority on assistance to capacity development in Bangladesh. Japan also finances several local NGOs' activities in health, education, vocational training and rural development, especially to support people in poverty.

In terms of governance, Japan is supporting the civil service reform and strengthening of the police. In addition, 20 public officials had started studies in Japan through Japan Development Scholarships (JDS).

Furthermore, Japan greatly expands its assistance in disaster management. Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries against climate change in the world. As a partner of Japan's Cool Earth

Partnership, Japan supports Bangladesh providing more than 80 cyclone shelters and meteorological radar systems in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, Patuakhali and Moulvibazar which well contributed to the early warning for the cyclones "SIDR" and "AILA".

Cultural Exchange

As you no doubt know, bilateral relations between Japan and Bangladesh are not limited to an economic arena. There are successive colorful cultural exchanges over the years. Unless we know each other's history, culture and tradition, we cannot build an international society with peace, progress and universal respect for justice. We need to create a global environment that respects the cultural diversity and identity. In this era of increasing globalization, we face the challenge of protecting our own cultures on one hand, and exchanging of cultures on the other. We are always willing to do what we can for the mutual understanding between our two peoples.

The Year 2009 witnessed a number of cultural events related to Japan. Japanese Cultural Event namely "Min'yo-Echoes of Japanese Folk Song" held at the National Theatre, which was organized jointly by Japan Foundation, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Embassy of Japan. It showed Japanese traditional songs, and the folk fusion with the Bangladesh traditional musical instrument was performed too. A Japanese drama "One Hundred Sacks of Rice," was played in three cities (Sylhet, Rajshahi and Khulna) other than Dhaka this year. "One Hundred Sacks of Rice," whose main theme is the importance of education, was played by Bangladeshi nationals. As a result of Japan-Bangladesh cooperation, the drama has been given "Uchimura Naoya Award" by International Theatre Institute this year. Other major events include the Ikebana demonstration that was held as associated event of Japan Trade Fair 2009, in which the instructors displayed their art works.

The human resource development has always been a top priority area in the bilateral relations between Japan and Bangladesh. This year, 215 candidates took the Japanese Language Proficiency Test in Dhaka. Jumping from 91 candidates 4 years ago, the number of candidates of the exam is annually increasing by more than 30% on average in recent 4 years. Next year, we would like to drive this very same Japanese Language boom more than before. We have put importance on educational programs. The doors of about 744 Japanese universities and research organizations are open to Bangladeshi students and in order to promote their enrollment, until now 2,847 Bangladeshi nationals have been awarded Japanese Government (Monbukagakusho) Scholarship. The programs of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Association of Overseas Technical Scholarship (AOTS) provide Bangladeshi nationals with training in state of the art technology in Japan.

We also have been developing our public diplomacy in order that Japan is better understood by the Bangladeshi people. We have been dispatching information on Japan's diplomatic policy towards Bangladesh and Japan-Bangladesh relationship, through my policy speeches, newspaper interviews and Website. We will continue these efforts next year as well.

Conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and members of the Japanese community for their significant contributions to promoting the bonds of friendship and trust between our two countries. I wish a happy and prosperous New Year to you all.

Tamotsu Shinotsuka
Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh

Spectacular view of Mount Fuji.



MESSAGE

It is a great pleasure and privilege for us to express on behalf of J.C.I.A.D. (Japanese Commerce and Industry Association in Dhaka) our warm gratitude and felicitations to the people and the Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the eve of His Majesty Emperor Akihito's 76th birthday to be celebrated in Japan on 23rd of December 2009.

J.C.I.A.D. has been relentlessly working for more than three decades for the development and expansion of bilateral relation in the field of trade and commerce between our two friendly countries. It has been exploring and assisting

Bangladesh to attract new investment opportunity from Japan.

On this auspicious event of our Emperor's birthday, I would like to request your continuous support and cooperation towards our effort of enhancing and further cementing the existing good relation between the two countries and peoples in the fields of economic and cultural activities for benefit of the people.

Masahiko Sugiyama
President
SHOO-KOO-KAI
(Japanese Commerce and Industry Association in Dhaka)

MESSAGE

It is indeed a great honor and privilege for me to extend heartfelt greetings and warmest felicitations on the occasion of His Majesty the Emperor Akihito's 76th Birth Anniversary.

This institution--JBCCI--was launched at a time when we were feeling the extreme need of starting a new trade regime with stronger mutual presence in each other's markets, exploring trade and investment opportunities between Bangladesh and Japan. In such perspectives we formed Japan Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI) in 2004 with

the support and cooperation of the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh. Under the umbrella of this bi-national Chamber we are devoting our time to support Japanese business interests in Bangladesh. We are also working to uphold values inherent in Japanese civilization which is unique in its philosophy and wisdom that promotes humane development, social justice, denounces war and encourages peace and stability for the Global family.

According to Japanese constitution the Emperor of Japan is "the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people". The

Meiji Restoration transformed Japan into a leader of the world from Asia and after the Second World War the nation rose to become the world's second largest economy. Emperor's position as the symbol of the state and the unity of people helped attainment of such changes. Japanese Corporate culture took the leadership role behind the change.

On behalf of members of Japan--Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI), I would like to express sincerest gratitude and homage to His Imperial Majesty wishing sound health, long life and

would like to see further progress and prosperity of Japan during the days to come. This Chamber will exert vigorous efforts in the interest of stronger mutual understanding, friendship, and genuinely wide-scale cooperation between the two countries.

We look forward to see strengthened relationship between two brotherly countries in every area of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Abdul Haque
President
Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry