

ARAB NEWS

INTERVIEW: Japanese FM leaves Tokyo for the UAE and Turkey



Hayashi said that Saudi Arabia is a key country in terms of stability in the Middle East, as a leader of Islamic Arab states and a member of the G20. (AFP)

ARAB NEWS JAPAN
March 19, 2022 14:48

TOKYO: Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi left Tokyo on March 18 for a three-day visit to the UAE and Turkey, where he will hold meetings with other foreign ministers and participate in different events.

In an interview Arab News Japan conducted with Hayashi before he departed from Tokyo, the Japanese foreign minister said he would discuss a wide range of issues, including the stability of energy resources and the situation in Ukraine.

Hayashi said that Saudi Arabia is a key country in terms of stability in the Middle East, as a leader of Islamic Arab states and a member of the G20. "Japan will further strengthen the strategic partnership with Saudi Arabia in many areas," Hayashi said.

He is scheduled to arrive in Turkey on March 19, where a meeting with Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will be held, followed by a joint press announcement.

Hayashi will arrive in Abu Dhabi on March 20 and meet Dr. Sultan Al-Jaber, the UAE's minister of industry and advanced technology. Later in the day, he will meet UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and attend a working dinner hosted by the minister.

A high-ranking official of the foreign ministry in Tokyo told Arab News Japan that Hayashi's visit to the UAE might include a trip to Expo 2020 Dubai.

In the interview, Hayashi said the main program of the visit will include holding meetings with other foreign ministers and participating in different events. "Turkey is situated in a geopolitically important location and is a strategic partner of Japan."

"On this visit, I seek to confirm our cooperation in a wide range of areas, including the economy, education, space and climate change. Regarding the situation in Ukraine, in particular, Turkey has been engaged in active diplomatic efforts based on its close relations with both Ukraine and Russia," Hayashi said. "I, therefore, intend to have an in-depth exchange of views with the Turkish side and confirm our close cooperation."

He added: "In the UAE, I will use the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations to promote cooperation on a number of issues that go beyond our existing cooperation in the energy field. This year, the UAE began serving as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council and holds its presidency this month. I will confirm our cooperation on the situations in Ukraine, Yemen and North Korea, among other issues."

Regarding Japan's bilateral relations with the UAE and Saudi Arabia respectively, the Foreign Minister explained that the Middle East was an important region for Japan, especially when it comes to energy security.

"The UAE and Saudi Arabia account for approximately 30 and 40 percent of Japanese crude oil imports respectively, and both countries are important partners for our energy security," he said.

Hayashi told Arab News Japan that cooperation with the two countries was of greater importance now given the spike in crude oil prices as a result of the situation in Ukraine.

“I intend to engage in a thorough discussion on this matter when I visit the UAE. At the same time, Japan has built friendly relations with these countries not only through our longstanding cooperation in the field of energy but through cooperation on a variety of other matters as well,” Hayashi said.

With the UAE, Japan has also made progress in recent years in a number of areas, including renewable energy, hydrogen and ammonia, science and technology, education, infrastructure and space, the Japanese Foreign Minister said.

“We intend to continue to strengthen our bilateral relationship, including through the early signing of the framework document for the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Initiative. This is a matter on which Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman also agreed in their phone call on March 15,” he added.

Hayashi continued: “Saudi Arabia is a key country in terms of stability in the Middle East, as both the leader of Islamic Arab states and a member of the G20. The leaders of Japan and Saudi Arabia have built close relations. In his phone call with the crown prince, Kishida expressed that, through the Saudi-Japan Vision 2030 cooperation framework and other means, Japan has provided public and private sector support for Saudi Arabia’s decarbonization and the diversification of its industry, as well as its domestic economic and social reforms. We will further strengthen the strategic partnership between our two countries.”

Saudi Arabia and the UAE called for a peaceful settlement of the situation between Russia and Ukraine. In his interview, Hayashi said: “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine infringes upon Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, constitutes a serious violation of international law prohibiting the use of force, shakes the foundation of the international order, which does not allow unilateral changes to the status quo by force, and is completely unacceptable. Japan strongly condemns it.”

“The “Aggression against Ukraine” resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly’s 11th Emergency Special Session on March 2 was adopted with the overwhelming support of the international community, with 141 countries voting in favor, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia,” he added. “This indicates the reaffirmation of the strong intention widely shared in the international community, and Japan welcomes it. The international community needs to remain united in issuing a strong message to Russia.”

Hayashi said that the stabilisation of the oil market “would benefit both oil-consuming and oil-producing countries, and Japan hopes that the UAE and Saudi Arabia, as

members of OPEC+, will contribute to the stabilisation of the global market by securing additional oil supply and production capacity.

“Japan aims to continue to cooperate with the international community, including the G7, to improve the situation. We intend to respond in close cooperation with the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries.”

With Saudi Arabia’s concern regarding Iran’s nuclear program, Hayashi said Japan has the capacity to utilize its traditionally friendly relations with Iran to conduct candid talks.

“We have urged the parties over which Iran has influence to refrain from taking actions that are contrary to the peace and stability of the region and to act constructively toward achieving a ceasefire and peace in Yemen. We will support the international community’s efforts toward ending the conflict in Yemen, including the activities by UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg,” he explained.

Hayashi continued: “I have also been working toward a ceasefire and peace in Yemen through phone calls with my counterparts in relevant countries. I will continue to work persistently toward realizing peace and stability in Yemen and the Middle East, including through the implementation of humanitarian aid and political engagement, in cooperation with countries inside and outside the region.”

- *[This article originally appeared on Arab News Japan](https://www.arabnews.com/node/2045711/middle-east)*

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2045711/middle-east>