

Congratulatory Remarks by Prime Minister KISHIDA
at the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment
of diplomatic relations between Japan and Pakistan

His Excellency Mr. Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan,
Ms. Ismat Hassan Sial, Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Japan,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to offer my congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Shehbaz Sharif on his assumption of office as Prime Minister.

Japan established diplomatic relations with Pakistan on 28th April, 1952, the very day when the San Francisco Peace Treaty went into effect and Japan regained its independence. Today marks exactly 70 years since then, and I am very pleased to celebrate this milestone with all of you.

Japan and Pakistan have nurtured friendly relations over the years, extending support to each other when in need.

In the postwar period, cotton exported from Pakistan to Japan backed its textile industry and greatly encouraged Japan's postwar reconstruction. In turn, Japan has continuously provided Pakistan with assistance mainly in its areas of expertise, such as water, healthcare, education and disaster management.

Both Japan and Pakistan are disaster-prone countries, and we have supported each other through the years. When Pakistan was struck by a massive earthquake in 2005 and by severe floods in 2010, Japan dispatched its disaster relief team and provided yen loans and grant aid. When the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred in 2011, Pakistan not only delivered relief goods, such as milk and biscuits, but Pakistani people residing in Japan traveled to the affected areas to serve hot meals to disaster victims.

Recently, when the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated last August, Pakistan extended generous support to Japan to facilitate the safe departure from Afghanistan

of Japanese nationals and Afghan staffs working in the Japanese Embassy and the JICA office.

Pakistan is located in a strategic place that connects Asia and the Middle East. It is, therefore, one of the most important countries not only for the stability of the region but also for international counter-terrorism efforts. In this context, we would like to cooperate with Pakistan to realize a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”.

In this milestone year, I wish to elevate our bilateral relations to new heights. I am determined to work with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the people of Pakistan even more closely for that purpose.

In closing, allow me to express my sincere wishes for the prosperity of our two countries and the further deepening of the friendship between the peoples of Japan and Pakistan.

Shukriya.

(END)