

International Conference on Ensuring a Sustainable Blue Economy in an open and interconnected Indo-Pacific Region: Japan-Bangladesh cooperation in Synergizing latent potentials among South & Southeast Asian Bay of Bengal Littoral and Adjacent Countries
Jointly organized by The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan and Center for Bay of Bengal Studies, Independent University, Bangladesh

Foreign Minister Momen, distinguished participants,

Today, I am honored to deliver my message to the International Conference on sustainable Blue Economy in a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

This year is an important milestone as it marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Bangladesh. Our two nations have built a close relationship over the past 50 years, as symbolized by our similar national flags. In this memorable year, I was also fortunate to be able to hold meetings with Foreign Minister Momen for two times.

Turning our eyes, around the world, we are facing a situation in which the international order is shaken by attempts such as unilateral change to the status quo and coercion by force being carried out bluntly without hesitation. Under such circumstances, the importance of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" is growing even further.

FOIP is a vision to realize a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region, which is indispensable for regional and global stability and prosperity. FOIP encompasses various policy initiatives, such as promotion and establishment of fundamental principles, including the rule of law and freedom of navigation, securing open economic prosperity through enhanced connectivity, and ensuring peace and stability. These efforts will also contribute to the promotion of a sustainable blue economy, to which Bangladesh attaches great importance.

Bangladesh is an important partner in realizing a FOIP, playing a key role in the development of the region as it is located at a strategic point connecting Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Japan will continue to support Bangladesh's graduation from the status of LDC and further development through various infrastructure projects, including the development of the Matarbari deep sea port,

under the "Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B)" initiative. This initiative will contribute to the development of the region as well as Bangladesh by realizing enhanced connectivity between Bangladesh and the surrounding areas.

I look forward to a fruitful discussion at today's meeting on how Japan's cooperation can contribute to Bangladesh's efforts by its ownership to promote a sustainable blue economy, strengthen connectivity, and address environmental issues and other challenges faced by the Bay of Bengal.

At this important milestone as our two countries enter the next 50 years, allow me to ask all the participants here today for continued support in taking Japan-Bangladesh relations to new heights and realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific".

Dhonnobad. Thank you.

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