

# Japan's Foreign Minister to QNA: Qatar-Japan Cooperation Exceptionally Strong, Working to Develop Strategic Partnership



Doha, January 12 (QNA) - HE Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Toshimitsu Motegi stressed that the cooperative relationship between Japan and Qatar is exceptionally strong, bound by multifaceted and robust ties, and building upon this long-standing friendship, it is crucial that the two countries further strengthen collaboration as "strategic partners".

In an interview with Qatar News Agency (QNA) on the occasion of his

upcoming visit to Doha, His Excellency said the cooperations between Japan and Qatar dates back to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972. Ever since, for over half a century, the relations between two countries have developed remarkably across a wide range of fields, including politics, economy, culture, and sports.

He added that this marks his second visit to Qatar after his first visit that was in 2021, and this presents an important opportunity to broaden the horizons of cooperation and coordination between the two countries and to discuss a number of important economic and political issues, including efforts to achieve peace in the region, especially in light of the developments in regional and international situations.

His Excellency described the cooperative relationship between the two countries as exceptionally strong, bound by multifaceted and robust ties. Building upon this long-standing friendship, it is crucial that our two countries further strengthen collaboration as strategic partners, he said.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan reaffirmed the long-standing traditional friendship between Tokyo and Doha which dates back to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972. "Ever since, for over half a century, relations between the two countries have developed remarkably across a wide range of fields, including politics, economy, culture, and sports."

His Excellency said: "It is said that "a friend in need is a friend indeed." This proverb perfectly represents the relationship between our two countries. For example, Japanese companies started importing LNG from North Field ahead of companies from other countries, contributing to the development of the LNG industry that has served as the foundation of Qatar's remarkable economic

development and prosperity. During the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, Qatar extended tremendous support, including an additional supply of 4 million tons of LNG and \$100 million in financial aid.

"Furthermore, amidst the unstable international situation, Qatar has assisted Japan in the evacuation of Japanese nationals overseas. Qatar has consistently been a true friend of Japan, helping and supporting us in times of need. The Japanese people will never forget the spirit of friendship and solidarity demonstrated by Qatar."

He further said that in the economic sphere, which forms the core of bilateral cooperation between Japan and Qatar, the two countries have mutually contributed to each other's development. Japan has done so through the development of natural gas plants and other projects, while Qatar has contributed by ensuring a stable supply of energy to Japan. In recent years, economic activities have expanded beyond cooperation on energy and into a broad range of fields, including infrastructure development.

He added that cultural exchanges are also active, including regional exchanges, sports exchanges, and academic exchanges.

Furthermore, at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, the Qatar pavilion attracted many visitors, showcasing Qatar's rich culture through impressive exhibits and performances.

HE the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan also congratulated Qatar on its qualification for this year's FIFA World Cup and wished both teams of Qatar and Japan the best of luck.

The Japanese Foreign Minister also reiterated that Japan-Qatar economic relations have developed from a basis of long-standing cooperation in the LNG sector. Japan has been deeply involved in the formation and operation of LNG projects in Qatar from their initial

stages, while also ensuring stable procurement.

"Japan recognizes that this cooperation has formed the foundation of our bilateral economic relationship based on trust, which goes beyond mere resource transactions. From here onward, we look forward to cooperation with higher added value, including in the LNG-related sector," he noted.

Amid the recent international discussions on energy transition, the importance of stable supply, implementation feasibility, and predictability is being reaffirmed, he added. Under such circumstances, Japan has engaged in the development of the LNG market in Asia, emphasizing the continued role of LNG while leveraging Japan's expertise in long-term contracts, infrastructure development, and operational management.

Building on this experience, he said, Japan aims to further deepen practical and constructive dialogue with Qatar, who we consider to be a key partner.

He pointed out that Japan has contributed to Qatar's economic development in areas of critical infrastructure, such as urban transportation, air transport, power generation, and desalination. This includes the construction of the Doha Metro and Hamad International Airport. "We look forward to further deepening economic cooperation between our two countries in a wide range of areas, in addition to the energy sector, especially in light of recent developments relating to long-term investment from Qatar to Japan."

Talking about the future of economic cooperation, he emphasized that Japan holds a strong interest in the long-term course of action outlined in Qatar's National Vision 2030, which emphasizes industrial upgrading and human resource development. Japan has accumulated significant experience in addressing industrial

structural transformation, human resource development, and the social implementation of technology. "We can expect the economic partnership between Japan and Qatar to become more robust and substantive, by leveraging each other's strengths."

On bilateral level, he said, working groups have already been established between Japan and Qatar under the ministerial-level strategic dialogue, focusing on improving the business environment and promoting investment. Practical discussions through such frameworks serve as a crucial foundation for giving concrete form to economic cooperation between our two countries, and it is expected that the role of such frameworks will continue to grow in importance.

Furthermore, long-term investment cooperation aimed at foreign direct investment to Japan is emerging between the Qatar Investment Authority and Japanese companies, he said, adding Japan views long-term foreign direct investment as a key growth factor and hopes that by improving the business and investment environment, direct investment from Qatar to Japan will continue to increase, further strengthening our bilateral economic relationship.

"Furthermore, while our economic relationship is the linchpin of our bilateral relationship, Japan is also interested in the potential for further expanding the geographical scope of the bilateral cooperation between our two countries. In this connection, Japan sees opportunities for Japanese companies to cooperate with Qatar in its recent active pursuit of investment and business expansion in third countries, such as its initiatives in Africa. Thus, it is expected that Japan and Qatar will advance their economic relations across a wide range of fields."

The Japanese Foreign Minister said that this marks his second visit to Qatar as Minister for Foreign Affairs, adding that his first visit was

in 2021, which marked the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Qatar. During this visit, the first "Strategic Dialogue" between Foreign Ministers was held.

During the upcoming visit, he said, he intends to engage in candid discussions during the Strategic Dialogue on bilateral relations, including further economic cooperation in addition to various topics of international concern, including the situation in Gaza, building on his recent visit to Israel and Palestine, and exchange views on how to cooperate for regional and global peace and prosperity with Qatar, which has been playing a constructive role toward the peace and stability of the region.

His Excellency said that he is looking forward to having an open and frank exchange of views with HE Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani to further extend cooperation between Qatar and Japan.

In this context, His Excellency noted the important role played by the State of Qatar in its regional and international environment, saying Qatar has continuously mediated negotiations, including the negotiations for the ceasefire and the release of hostages between Israel and Hamas, the peace negotiations between the US and the Taliban, and the negotiations over the exchange of detainees between the US and Iran, making significant contributions to regional stability.

He added Japan deeply respects the constructive role that Qatar has played and highly appreciates its diplomatic efforts, while expressing his solidarity with Qatar, which became a target of attacks last June and September, amid heightened tensions in the Middle East.

Regarding the situation in Gaza, he said that Japan intends to play an active role in the early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza, aiming

to contribute to the realization of a two-state solution and, by extension, to peace and stability in the Middle East. In this regard, Japan has decided on a new assistance package worth approximately \$170 million, covering humanitarian assistance in areas such as health and food, as well as recovery and reconstruction support, including debris removal, he added.

He added that Japan will actively play its part through the three pillars of "Japan's efforts for sustaining peace": continuous engagement in the governance mechanism of Gaza; comprehensive support for Palestinian state-building efforts; and expanding the network of assistance through Japan's own initiatives, such as the Conference on cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD). Taking this approach, Japan is resolved to further strengthen its coordination with Qatar, he said, adding that Japan will continue to play an active role in efforts toward achieving peace and stability in the Middle East, while working closely with Qatar and other countries concerned. (QNA)