

National Day Speech 2024

- H.E. Dr. Mohamed Maait, Minister of Finance,
- H.E. Eng. Ahmed Samir Saleh, Minister of Trade & Industry,
- H.E. Couns. Alaa Fouad, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs,
- H.E. Dr. Reda Hegazy, Minister of Education,
- H.E. Dr. Ali Moselhi, Minister of Supply and Domestic Trade,
- H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Esmat, Minister of Public Enterprise Sector,
- H.E. Amb. Ahmed Shahin, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs,

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for joining our national day reception to commemorate the birthday of His Majesty Naruhito, the 126th Emperor of Japan, who will turn 64 tomorrow.

We have heard the beautiful voice of Dr. Reda, who sang the national anthems of Egypt and Japan. In fact, he sang for us a Japanese song of hope, “Flowers will bloom” , when Japan was struck by the earthquake and tsunami of unprecedented scale in 2011, to send his message of hope and solidarity with us.

Japan and Egypt have long been bound by friendship that spans more than 160 years. In 1864, thirty some Samurai delegation from Japan visited Egypt, to encounter the oldest history of mankind and witness the progress of modernization in Egypt. The two countries share the same aspiration to modernize their countries, while preserving their own cultures and values they are proud of. Japan was among the first countries in Asia that recognized independence of Egypt in 1922.

Japan has always been a trustful partner for Egypt. This year marks the 70th anniversary since Japan and Egypt started development partnership in 1954. Throughout this partnership, Japan has always shared what it thought best for Egypt.

The Cairo University Pediatric Hospital (Japanese Hospital, 1982), The Opera House (1988), Peace Bridge over Suez Canal (2001). Footprints of our successful partnership abound in this country. The Grand Egyptian Museum, which will showcase the priceless artifacts of King Tut Ankh Amoun and the world's oldest two wooden boats, King Khufu's Solar boats, will be the new symbol of our friendship.

We believe education is the key for development and our educational partnership has been successful. Egypt Japan University of Science and Technology (EJUST), which was founded in 2010, is ranked No. 1 among the

Egyptian universities in Times global university ranking 2024. Every day, 13,000 Egyptian boys and girls attend 51 Egypt-Japan Schools (EJS) throughout the country and learn Japanese style education (Tokkatsu). The Egyptian Government decided to introduce Tokkatsu to all of its 17,000 public schools. In addition, the Embassy of Japan has partnered with 130 Egyptian NGOs to implement 178 community-based projects through providing small scale grant assistance “KUSANONE” over the last 30 years.

To our greatest pleasure, torch of friendship continues to be carried over to the next generation of Egyptians. In response to strong interest in Japanese culture and language among the Egyptian youth, there are now nine universities in Egypt that provide degrees for studying Japanese language. The Japanese language department in Cairo University celebrates its 50th anniversary of its foundation.

More than one thousand of its graduates have been at the forefront of teaching Japanese language in Egypt as well as in the Arab world, playing crucial role for mutual understanding between Japan and the Arab world. In sport, the popularity of Japanese martial art, Karate, has brought first Olympic woman's gold medal to Egypt in Tokyo 2021, by Ms. Feryal Abdelaziz. Silver medal in Judo had been won by Mr. Rashwan at Los Angeles.

Based on these broad-based solid friendship, HE President El Sisi and

HE Prime Minister Kishida of Japan agreed in Cairo April last year to upgrade the bilateral relations to "strategic partnership". The two leaders also shared their support for the vision of "Free and Open Indo-Pacific", which is a vision to uphold international order based on law, respecting inclusiveness and diversity.

As strategic partners, Japan will continue to work closely with Egypt for peace and development in the region. Japan dispatches 4 Self-Defense Ground Forces to MFO to contribute to peace and stability in Sinai. The pivotal role played by Egypt for providing crucial humanitarian assistance to Gaza and helping solve the crisis is highly valued. Japan condemns violence against civilians, calls for prompt humanitarian ceasefire, works with Egypt to provide humanitarian assistance, and supports moves toward achieving two state solution.

Since 1985, Japan and Egypt have co-hosted about 7,000 experts from 50 countries in the Middle East and Africa for training in Egypt, mainly in the fields of health, food and energy. For instance, thanks to this triangular cooperation, yield of rice production in some African countries has increased by 5 times, contributing to food security in Africa. Japan and Egypt jointly provide 300 scholarships for African students to pursue their post-graduate studies at EJUST, the Center of Excellence in Africa.

طبقاً للمثل الشهير في مصر، أجد نفسي محظوظاً بالعودة للقاهرة، مرةً أخرى منذ عامين، بعد 40 سنة من العمل كدبلوماسي، فوجدت أن ملامح هذا البلد تغيرت بشكل متميز.

لقد حققتم إنجازات مهمة في مجال البنية التحتية، ومنها تطوير أنظمة النقل العام، وشبكات الطرق السريعة على مستوى الدولة، وتوليد الطاقة المتجددة، والتي تعدّ الأكبر في الشرق الأوسط، فضلاً عن توفر الخدمات الصحية الممتازة وغير ذلك.

ولكن أكثر ما أذهلني هو أن كرم ضيافة المصريين لم يتغير على الإطلاق، رغم التغيرات الكبيرة التي شهدتها مصر.

يسعدني جداً أن الشركات اليابانية تقدم مساهمة كبيرة في هذه التطورات، من خلال استثمارات مباشرة جديدة، تبلغ قيمتها الإجمالية أكثر من 100 مليون دولار أمريكي منذ العام الماضي.

أودّ ان انتهز هذه الفرصة لأشكر جميع أصدقائي المصريين على دعمهم الثمين وصداقتهم المخلصة.

وآمل من كل قلبي، أن تظل اليابان ومصر شريكين لا غنى عنهما على هذا الكوكب لمدة 100 سنة قادمة.

وأتمنى استمرار الدعم الثمين من جميع أصدقائنا المصريين لتطوير هذه الصداقة المخلصة إلى الأبد.