

Japan-Bangladesh Joint Statement on Strategic Partnership

Tokyo, 26 April 2023

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of Japan H.E. Kishida Fumio, H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, made an official visit to Japan from 25th to 28th April 2023. During the visit, Prime Minister Kishida had a summit meeting with Prime Minister Hasina on 26th April. The two Prime Ministers confirmed that, guided by the traditional and time-tested friendship since the independence of Bangladesh, the two countries have achieved significant progress in bilateral relations based on the "Comprehensive Partnership" established in 2014. Noting that the two countries celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2022, as a manifestation of commitment and determination to contribute to enhancing the bilateral relationship based on common values and mutual interests, they decided to elevate the bilateral relationship to a "Strategic Partnership" as a guiding principle to lead the two countries' journey into the next 50 years and beyond. Both leaders shared the determination to enhance cooperation specifically in the following areas;

I. Cooperation for Peace and Stability in the Region and Beyond

1. Guided by the fundamental values and principles shared by the two countries, the two Prime Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law, where the rights, freedoms and sovereignty of all countries, regardless of size or power, are protected by international law, rules and norms. In particular, they affirmed that maritime order based on common values such as freedom of navigation is a cornerstone for stability and prosperity of the international community and that the use of the sea as global commons will contribute to the development of blue economy. Prime Minister Kishida explained that Japan, as the G7 Presidency, would like to demonstrate the G7's determination to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law and to enhance relations with partners in the international community beyond the G7. Prime Minister Hasina felicitated Japan on its G7 presidency. Prime Minister Kishida also outlined a newly released plan for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)", which will strengthen Japan's efforts to further promote the FOIP vision, with the four pillars of cooperation: "Principles for Peace and Rules for Prosperity," "Addressing Challenges in an Indo-Pacific Way," "Multi-layered Connectivity," and "Extending Efforts for Security and Safe Use of the "Sea" to the "Air". Prime Minister Hasina appreciated Japan's sustained efforts to contribute to securing regional and international peace, stability, and prosperity. She reiterated Bangladesh's principled position on a free, open, inclusive, peaceful and secure Indo-Pacific based on international law and shared prosperity for all.

2. Recognizing the importance of Bangladesh, which holds great economic potential and can be a bridge between huge economic markets, namely South Asia and Southeast Asia, the two Prime Ministers shared the recognition that developing quality infrastructure will enhance regional connectivity and contribute to the development of Bangladesh and the region. In this context, they stressed the importance of transparent and fair development finance to achieve sustainable development and highlighted the importance of adhering to international rules and standards, such as debt sustainability and transparency. They also shared the recognition on the importance of economic security including strengthening resilience of supply chain, and the rules-based international economic order to counter challenges such as economic coercion.

3. The two Prime Ministers welcomed recent frequent port calls at Chattogram by vessels of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the high-level mutual visits of the Japan Self-Defense Forces and Bangladesh Armed Forces. In light of the Memorandum of Cooperation and Exchanges formulated between the defense authorities from the two sides, they concurred to continue to promote security cooperation such as mutual visits by vessels and aircraft, unit-to-unit exchange, training programmes and goodwill exercises. In addition, both Prime Ministers have decided to consider opening Defense Wing in Tokyo and National Security Wing in Dhaka in their respective embassies in the near future. Furthermore, they concurred to enhance dialogue among the respective diplomatic and defense authorities in order to identify possible ways to strengthen the security cooperation. In this context, recognizing the future potential, they welcomed the commencement of negotiations on Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. Prime Minister Kishida explained Japan's efforts for fundamentally reinforcing its defense capabilities and strengthening diplomatic efforts, as illustrated in the new National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Buildup Program. Prime Minister Hasina shared Bangladesh's plan and initiative for further modernizing its armed forces under the Forces Goal 2030. Both Prime Ministers acknowledged the efforts by both countries to contribute to their respective regional security. Prime Minister Hasina acknowledged the establishment of the Official Security Assistance by Japan, a new cooperation framework for the benefit of armed forces and other related organizations of like-minded countries for the purpose of deepening security cooperation, and looked forward to future cooperation under this framework.

4. Recalling the relevant United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolutions, the two Prime Ministers affirmed that the war in Ukraine constitutes a violation of international law, in particular of the UN Charter, and is a serious threat to the international order based on the rule of law, with ramifications well beyond Europe, including in the Indo-Pacific. They reiterated the call for a peace process through dialogue and diplomacy

with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter. They expressed their deep concerns at the loss of lives from this war and urged for putting an end to civilian casualties and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance. In this context, they reaffirmed their consistent support for the Ukrainian people and emphasized that any threat to use nuclear weapons is unacceptable, and stressed that the use of nuclear weapons cannot be an option under any circumstances. They shared the view that the securities of Europe and of the Indo-Pacific are inseparable and also asserted that conflict in any region has ramifications in the Indo-Pacific. In this context, they expressed opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion anywhere in the world. They also shared the concerns that the war in Ukraine is putting global energy and food security at risk. In this regard, they called on all parties to continue to cooperate within the framework for grain exports under the four-party agreement.

5. Prime Minister Kishida explained the situation in the East and South China Seas to Prime Minister Hasina. The two Prime Ministers expressed their commitment to fully observing the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and reiterated that any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion and increase tensions that could undermine regional stability and the rules-based international order are unacceptable. They also underscored the importance of the freedom of navigation overall and overflight of the high seas and civil aviation safety, in accordance with the principles of international law and the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

6. The two Prime Ministers shared their strong concerns over DPRK's continued development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs in violation of UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs). They urged DPRK to comply fully with its obligations under all relevant UNSCRs. They further urged DPRK to address the humanitarian concerns of international community and resolve the abductions issue immediately.

7. The two Prime Ministers expressed concerns over the situation in Myanmar and called for an end to violence and armed conflicts, the release of those who are detained and the upholding of a democratic process. They reaffirmed their support for ASEAN efforts to seek a solution in Myanmar, and appreciated ASEAN Chair's active engagement in this regard. They called on the Myanmar authorities to urgently implement ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus. They are also deeply concerned that the neighboring countries, including Bangladesh, are facing spillover effects arising from the situation in Myanmar and demanded responsible acts by the Myanmar authorities.

8. Prime Minister Kishida commended Bangladesh for temporarily sheltering the forcibly displaced persons from Rakhine State, Myanmar and extending continued humanitarian assistance to them under the personal leadership of Prime Minister Hasina. The two Prime Ministers shared the view that protracted displacement will lead to increased burden on the host communities and instability in the region and that an ultimate solution to this crisis for peace and stability across the region is to realize a sustainable, safe, voluntary, and dignified repatriation of the displaced persons to Myanmar. Prime Minister Hasina stressed on the need for measures to be taken by the Myanmar authorities to create an environment conducive for the early return of the displaced population, including through addressing the root causes behind displacement. Prime Minister Hasina expressed her appreciation for Japan's support for the displaced persons thus far, including its humanitarian assistance as the first country to do so for those resettled in Bhasan Char. Prime Minister Kishida reiterated Japan's continuous support for them and announced the decision about additional support for the host communities and the displaced persons, including those in Bhasan Char, on top of approximately 2.3 billion yen through international organizations in February and March 2023 and the previous support worth approximately 190 million US dollars. The two Prime Ministers shared the importance of providing appropriate assistance such as education and skills training for their self-reliant lives after repatriation. Prime Minister Kishida expressed his intention to provide educational opportunities in Japan for students who were displaced from Myanmar to Bangladesh and deprived of schooling opportunities.

9. The two Prime Ministers affirmed their support to multilateralism based on the rule of law. They renewed their determination to work together with a view to strengthening the United Nations as a whole, including early reform of the Security Council, in order to deal with serious issues the international community is facing. Prime Minister Kishida expressed his gratitude to Bangladesh for its consistent support for the UN Security Council reform, including Japan becoming a permanent member.

10. Prime Minister Kishida appreciated Bangladesh's leadership and active role as the largest contributor of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations as well as in its capacity as the Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission for the year 2022. Prime Minister Hasina thanked the Government of Japan for its readiness to continue its cooperation with the 'Peace Building Center' in Bangladesh. The two Prime Ministers concurred to continue promoting cooperation on peacekeeping.

11. The two Prime Ministers affirmed their commitment to realizing a world without nuclear weapons. The two leaders reaffirmed that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation regime and essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They stressed that the 40-year long decline in global nuclear arsenals must be sustained and not reversed. In this respect, Prime Minister Hasina acknowledged Prime Minister Kishida's efforts on nuclear disarmament in line with the "Hiroshima Action Plan" and appreciated Japan's initiative to submit a Resolution entitled "Steps to building a common roadmap towards a world without nuclear weapons," adopted by the Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly in December 2022. Prime Minister Kishida expressed his appreciation for Bangladesh's support.

12. The two Prime Ministers shared their concerns over international terrorism and underscored the importance of disrupting terrorist networks and financing channels, as well as halting cross-border movement of terrorists. Prime Minister Hasina reiterated that her government maintains a "zero tolerance" approach to all forms of terrorisms, financing of terrorism and violent extremism, and has managed to suppress terrorist networks, including through effective community participation. Prime Minister Kishida appreciated her leadership and requested continuous efforts for securing the safety of Japanese nationals in Bangladesh, including those dedicated to international cooperation projects and Japanese business, and for enhancing efforts to counter violent extremism. They confirmed their intention to maintain cooperation in countering terrorism.

II. Deepening Economic Cooperation for Mutual Benefit and Regional Prosperity

13. Recalling Japan's commitment to provide assistance of up to 600 billion yen in about 4 to 5 years from 2014 expressed in the Joint Statement on 26th May 2014, the two Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction the successful fulfilment of the pledge. They further expressed satisfaction that Japan's assistance since 2014 totaled more than 2 trillion yen. Prime Minister Kishida congratulated Bangladesh on its graduation from Least Developed Countries (LDC) category with effect from 2026 and expressed his decision to continuously support Bangladesh's efforts towards its LDC graduation and further development. Prime Minister Hasina expressed her sincere gratitude for Japan's tremendous and effective support over the past 50 years as the largest bilateral development partner and acknowledged that the Japanese assistance had contributed greatly to its LDC graduation. They expressed their satisfaction with the progress of the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative and welcomed the commercial opening of Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line 6, the first electric train in Bangladesh, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2022. They reaffirmed that the development of Bangladesh through regional connectivity would contribute to the overall stability of the Indo-Pacific region and that the two countries would continue to 1) develop economic infrastructure, 2) improve

investment environment, and 3) enhance regional connectivity, in Bangladesh under the BIG-B initiative as well as the newly launched concept of Industrial Value Chain connecting the Bay of Bengal and neighboring regions. They decided to resume a bilateral policy dialogue in carrying out development cooperation projects. Prime Minister Kishida assured Prime Minister Hasina to consider a new budget support loan.

14. The two Prime Ministers welcomed the significant progress in the projects in Southern Chattogram region, including Matarbari deep sea port under the BIG-B initiative. They affirmed their continuous and accelerated cooperation so that Matarbari Port can become a hub of energy, logistics and industry in Bangladesh by using Japanese expertise and technology and can enhance connectivity between Bangladesh and its neighboring countries. They affirmed that two countries would explore cooperation in developing Southern Chattogram region including the improvement of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway. Prime Minister Hasina expressed her intention to make progress towards the early establishment of the Moheshkhali-Matarbari Integrated Infrastructure Development Initiative (MIDI) Authority under the Government of Bangladesh. Both Prime Ministers shared their intention to develop MIDI Master Plan.

15. Prime Minister Hasina welcomed the increasing number of Japanese companies in Bangladesh on the backdrop of the country's high economic growth. While Prime Minister Hasina pointed out the need to transform Bangladesh's economic structure to be a high-middle income country by 2031 and a smart developed country by 2041, the two Prime Ministers welcomed the launch of the Bangladesh-Japan Industry Upgradation Partnership for enhancement of industry in Bangladesh through public-private cooperation and recognized the need for cooperation in the field of intellectual property to promote investment and improve the business environment. They hoped that the Bangladesh Special Economic Zone (BSEZ), which was inaugurated in December 2022 in Araihaazar for Japanese and international companies will further deepen economic partnership between the two countries. With a view to enhancing economic exchange between the two countries, Prime Minister Kishida emphasized the necessity of continuous improvement of investment climate in Bangladesh and the two Prime Ministers welcomed good progress and resolution of some investment issues faced by Japanese companies through the Japan-Bangladesh Public Private Joint Economic Dialogue (PPED). Prime Minister Hasina assured of addressing the outstanding investment related issues flagged by the Japanese investors and expressed her commitment to further improving investment climate to encourage more Foreign Direct Investment from Japan in Bangladesh. The two Prime Ministers welcomed the result of the 5th PPED in April and concurred to hold the 6th Dialogue in Tokyo at the earliest in 2023 to review the progress in investment climate and investment promotion on a regular basis.

16. The two Prime Ministers welcomed the successful conduct of the first meeting of the Joint Study Group on the possibility of a Japan-Bangladesh Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in April 2023 and expected its steady progress. They also welcomed the signing of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement with a view to promoting further cooperation between the respective Customs Administrations.

17. The two Prime Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the progress of seven joint PPP projects reviewed in the 5th Bangladesh-Japan Joint PPP Platform Meeting held in Tokyo on 4th October 2022, and the 1st working level meeting based on revised MOC held in Dhaka on 8th February 2023, which encourages Japanese companies to expand their investment in Bangladesh and give a stronger boost to Bangladesh's development potential.

18. Prime Minister Hasina expressed gratitude to Japan's timely support for countermeasures against COVID-19 such as provision of 4.55 million doses of vaccines through COVAX, grant aid and support through contribution to international organizations as well as fiscal support loan amounting to 75 billion yen in total. The two Prime Ministers consented to continuously cooperate in the fight against COVID-19 and for the early recovery of the economy.

19. The two Prime Ministers acknowledged the need for intensified global efforts to combat climate change. Prime Minister Hasina acknowledged Japan's efforts to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and Prime Minister Kishida appreciated Bangladesh's active efforts during its tenure as the Chair of the Climate Vulnerability Forum and launching of Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan with a view to moving from "one of vulnerability to resilience and climate prosperity". Prime Minister Hasina apprised Prime Minister Kishida of her government's formulation of Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 in 2018. Welcoming the cooperation between the two countries in increasing energy efficiency and capacity and promoting renewable energy through the implementation of the Joint Crediting Mechanism consistent with the Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and the cooperation to formulate the power and energy masterplan by JICA, they concurred to step up cooperation under Japan's Asia Energy Transition Initiative. They also welcomed Japan's support to Bangladesh for the formulation of ambitious and long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies. They underlined importance of cooperation on earthquake, tsunami and cyclone-related disaster risk reduction. Both Prime Ministers expressed their intention to work actively toward successfully implementing the COP27 decision concerning loss and damage and affirmed to work together towards the success of COP28.

20. Prime Minister Hasina thanked Japan for its past support in the ICT sector for

“Digital Bangladesh”, including Miyazaki Bangladesh Model, and both leaders welcomed the signing of “the Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology including Cybersecurity”. Prime Minister Hasina invited investments in IT/ITES sector from Japan in Bangladesh’s High-Tech Parks.

21. The two Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation with a view to enhance agro-based business and promote investments. The two Prime Ministers recognized the importance of establishing food value chain by beneficial trade and investments in and cooperation on technologies and innovation with Bangladesh. They emphasized meaningful cooperation, particularly in the fields of adoption of new technology, agro- and food-processing and distribution, etc. for achieving sustainable food system. In this context, Prime Minister Hasina expressed her interest in promoting cooperation in the area of coastal aquaculture and deep-sea fishing with aim to harness the possibility of Blue Economy.

22. The two Prime Ministers affirmed the importance of economic development, rule of law and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for achieving SDGs, and also affirmed the importance of developing highly skilled human resources in public and private sectors and realize sustainable high economic growth. In this regard, the two Prime Ministers acknowledged the importance and progress of legal technical assistance provided by Japan. Prime Minister Kishida expressed his intention to continue wide cooperation in this area with Bangladesh including through sharing the experience of development in Japan and other Asian countries and people-to-people exchange between Japan and Bangladesh in order to develop human resources in public and private sectors in Bangladesh.

23. The two Prime Ministers acknowledged that Bangladesh’s abundant young labor force will contribute to supplement Japan’s labor shortage. In this context, Prime Minister Hasina welcomed the starting of skill exams and Japanese language tests of the Specified Skilled Workers in Bangladesh in February 2023, and expected further assistance for Japanese language education for Specified Skilled Workers. Both Prime Ministers welcomed the progress in the Technical Intern Training Program since the both sides signed the Memorandum of Cooperation in 2018 and expressed their intention to utilize the scheme to promote skills transfer.

24. Prime Minister Hasina recalled that Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) had been working closely with the local people and had played a major role for the development of Bangladesh and people-to-people exchange, and Prime Minister Kishida expressed his willingness to resume the dispatch of JOCV as early as possible to Bangladesh, while taking into account safety measures.

25. Prime Minister Kishida expected that Bangladesh will accede to the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 (HKC) at its earliest opportunity. Prime Minister Hasina expressed her intention to make efforts for the early accession to the HKC in 2023. In response, Prime Minister Kishida expressed his intention to consider supporting Bangladesh's efforts in the area of ship recycling, taking into account Bangladesh's need for the development of a Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility (TSDF).

III. Expansion of Cultural Cooperation and People-to-People Exchanges

26. Prime Minister Hasina appreciated Japan's support for construction of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Terminal 3 and the both leaders welcomed the selection of the concession project for the Terminal 3 by Japanese companies on the PPP platform. The Prime Ministers welcomed the planned resumption of the flight between Dhaka and Narita by Biman Bangladesh Airlines. The two Prime Ministers expressed their expectation that it would further expand the bilateral exchange and people-to-people contact.

27. The two Prime Ministers welcomed recent people-to-people exchange such as the establishment of the first friendship-city relationship of two countries between Naruto City in Tokushima and Narayanganj as well as the first dispatch from Bangladesh through JET programme. They expressed their intention to promote exchanges in various areas such as between academic institutions and think-tanks including in the areas of science and technology as well as in youth and sports, tourism, etc. Prime Minister Hasina expressed Bangladesh's intention to participate in the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, as an opportunity to further strengthen and broaden trade, investment and people-to-people links between the two countries. Prime Minister Kishida welcomed Bangladesh's participation and expressed his gratitude for Prime Minister Hasina's support for its success.

28. The two Prime Ministers appreciated the role played by institutions such as the Japanese Language and Culture program of the Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka, the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka and Japanese Universities Alumni Association in Bangladesh (JUAAB) in the fields of Japanese language education and Japanese studies. They expressed their shared intention to continue to support them.

29. The two Prime Ministers welcomed high-level exchanges and commemorative events during the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Bangladesh in 2022 including the commemorative coin between Japan Mint and Bangladesh Bank as well as specially designed postage stamp for the

commemoration between Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo and Japan Post and affirmed that they will continue to boost momentum of bilateral relations through high level exchanges including parliamentary exchanges and cultural exchanges furthermore in the future.

30. Prime Minister Hasina expressed her deep appreciation to Prime Minister Kishida and to the people of Japan for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to her during the visit. Prime Minister Hasina extended her cordial invitation to Prime Minister Kishida to visit Bangladesh. Prime Minister Kishida appreciated the invitation with deep gratitude and conveyed his intention to visit Bangladesh at a mutually convenient time.

Prime Minister of Japan

Prime Minister of
the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Signed at Tokyo on 26 April 2023

Appendix

List of Documents exchanged on the occasion of the Japan-Bangladesh Summit Meeting

1	Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters
2	Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Government of Japan and Ministry of Agriculture, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
3	Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology including Cybersecurity between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and ICT Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunication and IT, the People's Republic of Bangladesh
4	Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Government of Japan and the Ministry of Commerce, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Bangladesh-Japan Industry Upgradation Partnership
5	Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and Armed Forces Division, Prime Minister's Office, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
6	Memorandum of Cooperation between Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan and Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges of Bangladesh on Cooperation in the field of Metro Rail
7	Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan and the Ministry of Industries of Bangladesh in the field of Ship Recycling
8	Memorandum of Cooperation between the Japan Patent Office and the Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Intellectual Property