

Indonesia Independence Day Special

Toward a prosperous and harmonious relationship

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AMBASSADOR OF INDONESIA



Seventy-eight years ago, Indonesia officially declared its independence from the Dutch East Indies. Like many countries that shared a history of colonialism, Indonesia's independence was a declaration of our right to freedom, our desire for equal access, and our respect for fundamental human rights irrespective of race, origin and beliefs. More than that, our independence showed that we, too, have sovereignty and can determine the path to our future.

For many Indonesians, Aug. 17 is a celebration and a reflection on how far we've come and the possibilities we can achieve as a nation. On this particular day, we honor our predecessors for their relentless acts of sacrifice and their hopes for

future generations to work toward a prosperous and harmonious Indonesia.

Undoubtedly, Japan was instrumental in Indonesia's nation-building efforts post-1945. Japan and Indonesia worked together in areas of mutual interest, including business and industry, social culture and people-to-people relationships. Indonesia and Japan later established diplomatic ties in 1958, and our relations have since been profound and fruitful. The visit of Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako to Indonesia in June signifies that special bond and future connections between our two peoples.

Some say, "It takes two to tango." And that certainly rings true when it comes to our relationship. Our countries' economic and market complementarities have worked wonders for the past 65 years, making our economies some of the largest in the region.

Our achievements together amid global uncertainties have also been remarkable — bilateral trade is at its peak, and investment in strategic industries, such as green energy,

infrastructure and automobiles, continues to be strong. In 2022, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia's trade with Japan reached \$23.2 billion, with the agriculture sector leading the expansion at 11.2% year on year. And Japanese investment in Indonesia reached \$2 billion through about 7,000 projects in the same year. Greater participation in global value chains and the development of future industries will likely shape our cooperation in the years to come.

As democracies, our countries play a unique role in promoting a prosperous, stable and peaceful world. This year, Japan successfully hosted a summit of the Group of Seven major industrial nations in Hiroshima. As a G7 outreach partner country, Indonesia was pleased to have positively contributed to the effort and committed to working with the international community to maintain regional stability and global order.

For Indonesia, these aspirations have long been in our DNA. Our constitution, written in 1945, mandates that Indonesia actively create and maintain peace everywhere. Our founding fathers understood that without peace, there is no stability, even in the remotest of places. With globalization, the world has become even closer.

Last year, Indonesia chaired the summit of the Group of 20 leading rich and developing nations in Bali. The theme of Indonesia's G20 presidency was "Recover Together, Recover Stronger," a call for collective action to tackle some of the world's challenges. The G20 Bali leaders' declaration reaffirmed our commitment to cooperate in addressing a multidimensional crisis that may have severe long-term economic and social effects. With the support of Japan, Indonesia's G20 presidency was a great success, and we have since worked



Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and first lady Iriana Jokowi are flanked by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his wife, Yuko, as they pose at the G7 summit in Hiroshima.
INDONESIAN
PRESIDENTIAL PALACE



A female Sumatran orangutan with a baby hangs out in Gunung Leuser National Park, in Sumatra. GETTY IMAGES

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together to realize our commitments.

This year, Indonesia is the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The theme of Indonesia's presidency is "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth."

First, ASEAN does matter. Given today's geopolitical and geoeconomic dynamics, we must adapt and evolve to ensure ASEAN centrality. With our dialogue partners, ASEAN seeks to strengthen its institutional capacity and mechanisms.

Second, ASEAN remains resolute in ensuring that it continues to be the epicenter of growth that is inclusive, resilient and sustainable. Indonesia, together with the nine other ASEAN member states and Timor-Leste, will ensure regional stability and prosperity remain at the top of the agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of regional conflicts are reminders that there is no room for complacency.

Japan is ASEAN's most dynamic dialogue

partner. We commend Japan's support in realizing our goals this year, which saw our partnership turn 50, marking our golden anniversary. It is therefore timely to establish an ASEAN-Japan comprehensive strategic partnership as a symbol of our special relationship. We look forward to finalizing our partnership at the commemoration summit for the 50th year of ASEAN-Japan friendship and cooperation later this year.

As we look into the future, I am convinced that our two countries share similar hopes and visions. In the Indo-Pacific, we strive to promote a stable and peaceful region. Indonesia and Japan have a unique voice, and together, we can be a force of good and a reliable partner in the area. As we move forward, I hope that our two countries can achieve new milestones that benefit our peoples.

To the people of the Republic of Indonesia and Japan, happy 65th anniversary!



Lempuyang Temple is on Bali, which hosted last year's G20 summit. GETTY IMAGES

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