

Laos National Day Special

Aspiring to bolster friendly partnership

PHONGSAMOUTH ANLAVAN
AMBASSADOR OF LAOS



After many decades of fighting for independence against foreign aggression and colonization, the Lao People's Democratic Republic was proclaimed on Dec. 2, 1975. This is a meaningful day

for all multiethnic Lao people as it brought a sense of real freedom, ownership and self-determination. Every year, the party, government and corporate entities, as well as Lao people within and outside the country, jointly celebrate this important day to review our previous accomplishments and pay respect to our ancestors who dedicated, sacrificed and tirelessly struggled for the liberation and development of the country.

I am proud to witness the progress and development of the Lao PDR throughout the last 48 years. Under the leadership of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, our country has enjoyed political stability, economic growth and social order. The party and government have created policies and strategies in each period, based on national and regional circumstances, aimed at protecting our sovereignty and territorial integrity and building peace, independence, democracy, unity and prosperity.

2023 marks the onset of recovery after the four-year outbreak of COVID-19. Before the pandemic, the Lao PDR witnessed consistent economic growth, averaging 7% annually. This year, growth is expected to reach only 4.2%, which is lower than expected. While the country still faces many challenges, such as financial and economic difficulties, including inflation and climbing

global food and energy prices, the government is actively engaged in implementing comprehensive measures and has made addressing economic and financial hardship a key priority in the national agenda.

The Lao economic structure is gradually shifting toward industrialization and modernization. Many sectors have been expanded, resulting in a reduction in the poverty rate and enhancing people's living standards. Additionally, there has been an increase in the birth rate, a decrease in child mortality and a rise in the number of young citizens, with individuals aged 15 to 64 constituting 64.9% of the population. Based on a 2021 assessment by the U.N. Committee for Development Policy, the Lao PDR is expected to be able to escape from least-developed country status in 2026. I am optimistic the Lao PDR will accomplish this as expected.

The Lao PDR and Japan have enjoyed long-standing, friendly relations and good cooperation for almost seven decades since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955. I am pleased to recognize that the existing strategic partnership, established in 2015, has been deepened and broadened in many areas. 2023 is another remarkable year for bilateral relations as the leaders of our countries have returned to face-to-face visits following the pandemic. Outstandingly, the president of the Lao PDR paid a visit to Japan in May. Beyond that, there have been many alternating visits between high-ranking officials of our two parties, parliaments and governments this year. Recently, our foreign ministers had reciprocal visits within a single month. Both sides held candid discussions and agreed to work together to further upgrade the bilateral strategic partnership to greater heights.

Japan has been the top donor of official development assistance to the Lao PDR



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida greets President Thongloun Sisoulith at a summit meeting in Tokyo on May 25. LAO NATIONAL TELEVISION

since 1991. Especially noteworthy this year was the signing of four exchanges of notes concerning grant assistance projects to our country, including the significant Chao Anouvong Stadium reconstruction project at a cost of ¥4.17 billion. This will become an important sports facility for the people in Vientiane and the Lao people as a whole. Furthermore, there are many technical assistance projects being provided, as well as assistance in preparing for the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations next year. All assistance has significantly contributed to our national socioeconomic development. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the government and the people of Japan for assisting my country over the past decades.

Regarding economic cooperation, bilateral trade volume has increased by 72%

compared with 2017. I note that our countries still have much potential for further cooperation, particularly in the areas of agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, green energy and tourism. The Lao PDR has an abundance of natural resources, forests, rivers and fertile soil, while Japan has capital, knowledge and advanced technology. Further expansion of our cooperation in the agriculture sector should be an issue of interest to both sides.



Salemxy Kommasith and Japan's Foreign Affairs Minister Yoko Kamikawa after signing and exchanging notes in Tokyo on Nov. 10.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE LAO PDR



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Saleumxay Kommasith (left) receives a symbolic key from Japan's Ambassador to Laos Kenichi Kobayashi during a ceremony to celebrate a Japanese donation to Laos ahead of its assumption of the 2024 ASEAN chairmanship in Vientiane on Nov. 13. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE LAO PDR

Hydroelectric power is one of our main exports. Fostering cooperation in the green energy sector would contribute to the realization of Japan's Asia Zero Emission Community initiative. Tourism is also a substantial source of income for our countries. To increase the number of tourists, promote business cooperation and enable people-to-people contact, opening direct flights is highly supported by both sides. To attract more foreign direct investment and visitors, the Lao government has regularly improved the investment environment through both regulatory improvements and infrastructure upgrades, including the development of special economic zones.

In 2024, the Lao PDR will assume the role of ASEAN chair and launch a "Visit

Laos Year" campaign. On behalf of the Embassy of the Lao PDR in Japan, I would like to invite all readers to visit Laos, to experience our culture and traditions, see world heritage and other attractive tourist sites and taste the unique flavor of our cuisine, as well as explore potential business opportunities.

2025 will be another momentous year as we will commemorate the 70th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations, and I hope to see more diverse cooperation expand between our countries.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

CONGRATULATIONS

to the Lao People's Democratic Republic
on the Anniversary of Their National Day

JAPAN-LAOS ASSOCIATION

President: Itsuo Hashimoto
Former Ambassador to Lao PDR



HAZAMA ANDO
CORPORATION



Charcoal-Tree Planting Task Force
(特定非営利活動法人炭の木植え隊)

Congratulations

to the Lao People's
Democratic Republic
on the Anniversary of
Their National Day



SANKO CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD

140-3 Tsudaka, Kita Ward, Okayama City,
Okayama Pref., Japan 701-1152

<https://sanko-cothax.jp/>

Congratulations

to the Lao People's Democratic Republic
on the Anniversary of Their National Day



Japan-Laos HRD
Business Cooperative

<https://www.jlhrdbc.jp/>

Congratulations

to the Lao People's Democratic Republic
on the Anniversary of Their National Day



TAKANE Electronics Co., Inc.

CEO: Toshinori Minohara

2-7-11 Miyauchi, Nakahara Ward, Kawasaki, Kanagawa
TEL: +81-(0)44-751-6101 FAX: +81-(0)44-751-6103
<https://www.takane-jp.com/>

Congratulations

to the Lao People's Democratic Republic
on the Anniversary of Their National Day



The International
Friendship Exchange Council (FEC)
Landic Toranomon Bldg. No. 2, 3F
3-7-8, Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0001
TEL: (03) 3433-1122 <http://www.fec-ais.com>



Congratulations

to the Lao People's Democratic Republic
on the Anniversary of Their National Day



寮都産業株式会社
LIEU TOU INDUSTRY CO.

Beer Lao Official Agent CEO: Satoshi Muramatsu

<https://www.lieutou.co.jp>

Access
QR code to Order
Beer Lao



ຄົບຮອບ48ປີ

ຊົມເຊີຍວັນສ້າງຕັ້ງ ສປປ ລາວ
ທີ2 ທັນວາ ໝື່ນຍົນ

Walking with Lao friends

TOHKEMY

<https://www.tohkemy.co.jp/>



Clean water for small towns