

Azerbaijan republic day

Pioneering democracy proves reliable partner

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CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF
AZERBAIJAN

It is my great pleasure to address the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan — Republic Day — and to extend my warmest and sincere greetings to the people of Japan.



The Republic of Azerbaijan is the largest state situated in the Southern Caucasus, the country with the rich historical past, beautiful nature and architectural monuments.

Located on the western shores of the Caspian Sea, the Republic of Azerbaijan is a transit country between East and West and one of the main trade, transport and cultural centers on the great historical Silk Road.

On May 28, 1918, Azerbaijan became the first country in the East to establish a democratic republic with a functioning parliament, which unfortunately lasted very shortly and ended in 1920. In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan restored its independence and became a member of the United Nations on March 2, 1992.

Abundant with natural resources, in particular with hydrocarbon resources, the Republic of Azerbaijan plays an important role in the formation of global energy policy. The energy projects play significant roles in shaping the geopolitical image of the country.

The development of vast oil and gas resources of Azerbaijan

and their delivery through the East-West energy corridor provide a solid foundation for sustainable economic growth and the energy security of Europe.

As a result of market reforms that have been implemented over the past few years, Azerbaijan has achieved considerable progress in economic performance and the attraction of foreign investment.

This year, we will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of our independence. Of course, in terms of history this is not so long a period of time. But over those 20 years Azerbaijan has proven itself as a reliable partner: The policy of Azerbaijan is predictable and directed toward ensuring peace and security in the region.

Stability and peace in Azerbaijan, as well as its beautiful nature, are important factors that make our country a very attractive tourism destination. In

recent years, dozens of 4- and 5-star hotels and resorts meeting international standards have been built throughout the country. 2011 was declared a year of tourism in Azerbaijan, which means a large number of tourism projects are going to be implemented. As a result of all the work done, we have observed a considerable increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting Azerbaijan. Taking this opportunity, I would like to stress that Japanese nationals who wish to visit Azerbaijan can obtain tourist visas at the embassy free of charge.

Unfortunately, the Republic of Azerbaijan still suffers from the consequences of a dispute with neighboring Armenia. As a result, 20 percent of our territories — the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts — remain under occupation.

Azerbaijan is committed to

the peaceful solution of the problem. The U.N. Security Council adopted a number of resolutions that demand immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan and return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes. The international community and all countries, including Japan, support the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches great attention to its relations with Japan. Relations between our countries developed very successfully after Azerbaijan became independent in 1991. We cooperate in different spheres and have very strong political, economic and cultural relations based on mutual respect, interests and friendship. The recent official visit of H.E. Ilham Aliyev, presi-

dent of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to Japan in 2006 greatly contributed to enhancing cooperation in all spheres of bilateral relations.

In March 2011 the people of Japan experienced hard times when an earthquake and ensuing tsunami caused huge damage and human loss. After this unprecedented natural disaster the Republic of Azerbaijan expressed its solidarity with Japan

and provided relief money of \$1 million to alleviate the sufferings of those who lost their homes and relatives. It is our firm belief that the people of Japan will overcome this difficulty soon.

The government of the Republic of Azerbaijani is persistent in strengthening existing ties with Japan and deems it a priority to have more enhanced cooperation.



Nature: Azerbaijan is home to a variety of terrain, from forests and mountains to plains and deserts. EMBASSY OF AZERBAIJAN



Capital: Located on the shore of the Absheron Peninsula, which projects into the Caspian Sea, Baku is the largest city and largest port in Azerbaijan. EMBASSY OF AZERBAIJAN

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

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