

Myanmar National Day

Working together for further economic development and growth

U Thuraing Thant Zin
AMBASSADOR OF THE EMBASSY OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF
MYANMAR

Jan. 4 is the Republic of the Union of Myanmar's 69th Anniversary of its Independence



Day, which marks the triumph of our independence struggle. On this auspicious occasion, on behalf of the government of Myanmar and on my own behalf, I would like to convey our warmest greetings to the government and the people of Japan.

Despite committed guerilla war waged by the nationalists against the colonialists in their respective areas, Myanmar lost her independence in the late 1800s. As General Aung San and other leaders were repelling colonialists, people again were subject to being hurt by the enemy. So the Burma army joined hands with the people to put up a strong resistance and drove them out of Myanmar. Myanmar regained her independence on Jan. 4, 1948. The collaborative efforts of all races that made the supreme sacrifice for their country resulted in Myanmar becoming a sovereign nation that celebrates its 69th anniversary in 2017.

Having various experiences

between the period of 1948 and 2017, under the leadership of Her Excellency State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy Party won the last year's March elections with 77.1 percent of the vote, and the first-ever newly elected civilian government was formed on March 31. After formation of the new government, President U Htin Kyaw's brief inaugural speech focused on four domestic areas: national reconciliation, internal peace, emergence of a constitution that aims to establish a democratic federal union and raising the quality of life for the majority of the people.

For the peace process, the government held the 21st-Century Panglong-Union Peace Conference on Aug. 31 with government representatives, the parliament, defense services, ethnic armed organizations, political forces and civil service organizations participating. The government aims to hold political negotiations based on the Panglong spirit and the principle of finding solutions through the guarantee of equal rights, mutual respect, and mutual confidence between all ethnic nationalities.

For economic development, the government released its economic policy on July 29 highlighting the importance of developing a market-oriented system "in all sectors" and establishing an economic framework in support of national reconciliation.



President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar His Excellency U Htin Kyaw

The 12-point policy ranges from the privatization of some state-owned enterprises to the development of infrastructure and job creation as basic considerations of the policy. The policy puts national reconciliation as the top priority based on a "just balancing of sustainable resource mobilization and allocation across states and regions."

In international relations, our foreign policy since the attainment of independence has seen Myanmar maintain good relations with all nations in the world. On April 22, our state counsellor pledged that the government would adopt a people-centered policy, emphasizing the relations between peoples of nations, creating friendly and cooperative relations between them. The people-to-people diplo-

macy is especially the right approach for smaller states' relations with big powers and can be utilized to explain the country's pragmatic foreign policy and to paint a rational attitude and positive image of the small state concerned.

Therefore, the government considered its relations with all nations in the world. Among them, Japan is one of the partners to provide assistance and great efforts for Myanmar independence. When young Burmese nationalists opposed British colonial regime, Japan assisted Myanmar.

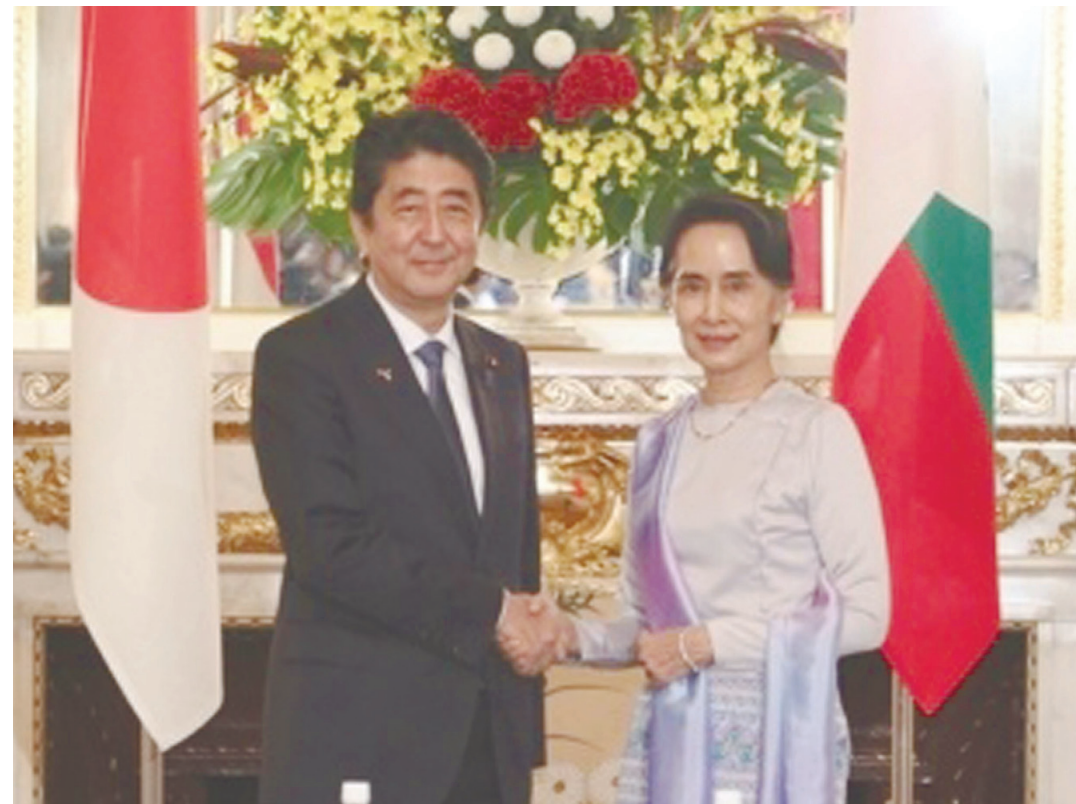
General Aung San recruited the "Thirty Comrades," a pantheon of heroes who were given military training by the Minami Kikan at Hainan Island and when war broke out in December 1941, these comrades became the nucleus of the Burma Independence Army (BIA), which fought alongside the Japanese army in its conquest of the country in early 1942. Therefore, we have a long relationship, and established diplomatic relations on Dec. 1, 1954. Today, Japan has extended political and economic cooperation focusing on various areas in order to support Myanmar's efforts for reforms toward democratization, national reconciliation and sustainable development.

Our state counsellor visited Japan in November and met with H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and signed the

exchange notes for the dispatch of volunteers to Myanmar under the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers Program. Additionally, Japan extended economic assistance worth ¥40 billion over the next five years for development projects in ethnic minority areas in Myanmar. Japan contributed a total of about ¥800 billion through Myanmar-Japan cooperation programs in support of the Myanmar government's efforts for equitable development between rural and urban areas over next five years. It was a very successful visit for our relations.

In conclusion, I would like to state that I will work toward future Myanmar-Japan cooperation as ambassador of Myanmar in Tokyo. For further development and economic growth, we have to further the exchanges between our countries in a wide range of sectors. Also, I would like to request your support for our reform process toward a modern, democratic, peaceful, and economically vibrant nation and in the future together we can celebrate the fulfillment of all of our aspirations.

In addition, I am working to see firsthand the deepening diplomatic, economic and cultural relationships between two countries. The journey traveled thus far is itself the best evidence of how far we can travel together in the next journey going forward.



Top: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shakes hands with Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi during her visit to Japan in November. Above: Delegates and observers at the Union Peace Conference held in August at the Myanmar Convention Centre EMBASSY OF MYANMAR



Above right: The Stone Pillar of Independence in Yangon, Myanmar, with the Sule Pagoda to the left and Yangon city hall in the background. Above: Mandalay Royal Palace, completely made of teak, houses dozens of buildings, including audience halls, throne halls, a monastery, a watch tower and a library where Buddhist scriptures are kept, in its large complex. EMBASSY OF MYANMAR



Congratulations

to the People of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
on the 69th Anniversary of Their Independence

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