

Indonesia Independence Day Special

Global peace and prosperity via strong collaboration

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AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA



Entering its 74th year of independence, Indonesia has been successful in navigating itself through challenges and opportunities. Indonesia has remained true to its independence goals,

which are to protect its people and territory, promote welfare and education and participate in the promotion of world order based on freedom, eternal peace and social justice.

With the ever-strengthening challenges facing the global values of collaboration and multilateralism, Indonesia works continuously to overcome global challenges of regional instability, extremism, irregular migrations, the weakening global economy, climate change and natural disasters.

The works of our 132 missions in 95 countries around the world truly have been the very reflection of Indonesia's free and active foreign policy. Over the years, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations have also remained as Indonesia's policy cornerstones and choice of platforms to voice Indonesia's principles of peaceful coexistence as well as freedom and eternal peace.

To name a couple of Indonesia's latest contributions toward fostering the values of collaboration and multilateralism are the establishment of the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific" statement and being granted nonpermanent membership to the United Nations Security Council for the 2019-2020 period.

Indonesia also attaches great importance to collaborative works with other regions beyond ASEAN, particularly to bolster regional prosperity through sustainable

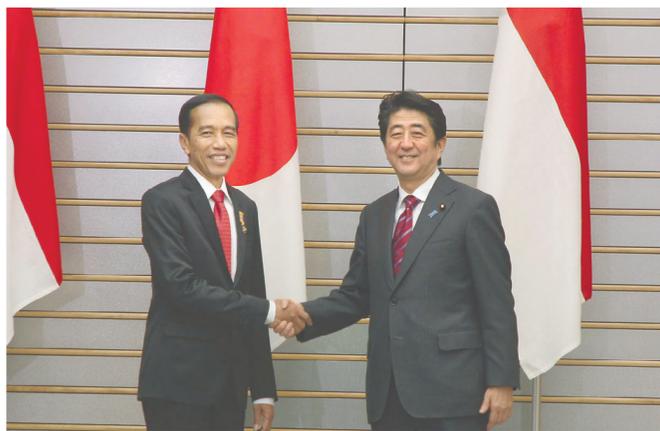
and equitable development and closer economic integration. Some of our latest gatherings are the first World Conference on Creative Economy; the Pacific Exposition: Creating Pacific Momentum; the Indonesia-Africa Forum; and the forthcoming Indonesia-Africa Infrastructure Dialogue.

At a national level, Indonesia also managed to secure a steady economic growth of 5.07 percent in the first quarter of 2019 and 5.13 percent growth in the second quarter. Coordinated and prudent macroeconomic policies are the strategies that have been successfully guiding Indonesia's economy that is projected to grow 5.1 percent overall this year and to 5.2 percent in 2020.

This year's celebration also marks another important milestone for our country. The people of Indonesia have made it through a series of elections that have become a moment of maturity for democracy in Indonesia. As we move forward with unity as our main pillar, Indonesia is optimistic and ready to transform itself to become a more adaptive, productive, innovative and competitive nation.

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As expressed by President Joko Widodo in his first re-election speech in July, the president is gearing the country up for big changes ahead. First among the preparations is the continuation of developing large and small infrastructure projects. In the past four years, toll roads as well as those in villages and remote areas have been developed. Additionally, by the end of this year, more roads are expected to be completed. Such developments are needed as the basic requirement to narrow development



Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands at their summit meeting in Tokyo on March 23, 2015. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA

gaps and enhance Indonesia's economic competitiveness.

The toll roads, railways, seaports and airports that we are building will be interconnected and ensure the ease of mobility and doing business among domestic industries—small-scale industries, special economic zones and tourism efforts within our country.

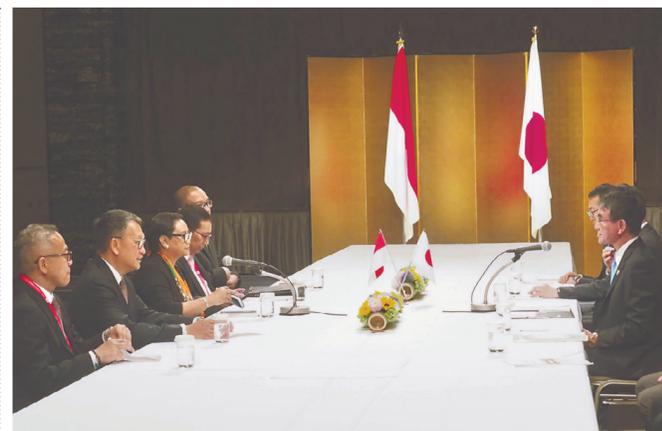
Second is human development. As we are experiencing a period of demographic bonus, it is pertinent for Indonesia to prioritize developing skilled individuals, particularly in mastering information communications and technology, in order to boost our competitiveness even further. Development of the education system, vocational schools and training and talent management for the Indonesian diaspora are some of the key measures that are a prerequisite to expediting Indonesia's nation building.

Thirdly, enhancing investment oppor-

tunities. The president understands the importance of investments and exports for the country's development, especially in the context of economic growth and employment. Thus, he will continue to reform Indonesia's regulation, improve the investment climate and promote ease of doing business in Indonesia.

The fourth area of focus addresses bureaucratic reform. Indonesian government institutions are preparing to improve their performance in order to transform into streamlined, agile and cutting-edge entities. The soon-to-be-formed National Cabinet will be the very first test case for Indonesia's commitment to reform its bureaucracy to achieve the envisioned good governance.

Fifth on the list of priorities is a focused and on-target use of the national budget. Besides tax incentives and research and development, the effective use of the national budget is another key instrument to accelerating Indonesia's competitiveness.



Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi (left, center) speaks with her Japanese counterpart Taro Kono (right) at their meeting in Osaka on June 27. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA

Indonesia's future national budget will be managed with more focus and on target. The government will use the national budget to invest in fields that will have great impact and benefits for the growth of the nation, especially talented individuals, by creating vocational training and vocational education policies.

The Japan-Indonesia relationship has always been close, with a shared history based on mutual respect that is complementary toward one another. To date, Japan is the second-largest foreign investor in Indonesia, therefore economic cooperation will remain high in the two countries' bilateral agenda.

We are confident that the incentives extended to foreign investors, such as public and private partnerships, a one-stop integrated service, tax holiday and super deductible tax will increase Japan's investment and trade to Indonesia. Indonesia is indeed ready for business.

Nevertheless, with the numerous common interests between our two countries, Indonesia and Japan can further explore and realize more strategic collaborations in various areas. Among others, these include shared efforts under the Indo-Pacific mechanism, maritime cooperation, connectivity, geothermal energy, waste-to-energy, the "blue economy" (ocean management), creative economy, ecotourism and youth-to-youth contacts.

In years to come, I am optimistic that Indonesia-Japan bilateral relations will continue to thrive and manifest into robust cooperation in all sectors. The outcome of Indonesia's recent election will serve as an impetus to foster an even stronger bond as our two great countries enter a new era of partnership in beautiful harmony.

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



Indonesian and Japanese high school students who participated in the Japan-Indonesia Teenage Ambassadors program pose for a photo in Tokyo in January 2018. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA



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August 17, 2019



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