

Laos National Day Special

Progress from six decades of friendly ties

PHONGSAMOUTH ANLAVAN
AMBASSADOR OF THE LAO PDR



On the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the proclamation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I, Phongsamouth Anlavan, ambassador of the Lao PDR to Japan, would like to convey warmest

greetings and best wishes from His Excellency President Thongloun Sisoulith and Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, members of the imperial family and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, as well as good health and well-being to the people of Japan.

I also would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the government and people of Japan, as well as all

Japanese friends and Laotian people residing in Japan, for the immense and invaluable assistance provided to the Lao PDR throughout the years.

Over the past 46 years, the Lao PDR has continued to enjoy political stability, social order and ongoing economic growth, which has significantly contributed to poverty reduction and improved living standards for all multiethnic people. The poverty rate was reduced from 46% in 1992 to 18% in recent years, a development achieved using the five-year National Social-Economic Development Plans (NSED) as guidelines. This despite an annual average gross domestic product rate of only 5.8% over the past five years (2016 to 2020), which was lower than the projected rate of 7%. We achieved significant improvements in infrastructure and connectivity in 2021, especially the Vientiane-Vangvieng Highway and a high-speed railway that will officially open this month. Other projects to further promote and facilitate tourism, trade and

investment are underway in the country. Furthermore, the government recently approved the ninth NSED (2021 to 2025) focusing on efforts in six areas: ensuring smooth, stable, high-quality and sustainable national economic growth; developing and increasing human capacity; improving well-being; achieving environmental integrity; pursuing integration and connectivity; and reinforcing good governance.

Nevertheless, the Lao PDR has experienced the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. When infections took an unprecedentedly sharp upswing in April, it caused a tough challenge for the government to respond to and control, and definitely slowed our economic development.

Regarding the bilateral relationship between the Lao PDR and Japan, the countries have enjoyed long-standing friendly relations and good cooperation over 66 years and elevated the relationship to a strategic partnership in 2015. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has caused difficulty

in holding face-to-face exchanges and high-level visits, our governments have continued maintaining regular consultations to further enhance and intensify this relationship, including a telephone call between our prime ministers in April and online ministerial meetings. Japan continued providing invaluable assistance to the Lao PDR, including the signing of an exchange of notes for receiving a grant project from the Japanese government on July 15; the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship worth ¥313 million; and the donation of medical equipment and more than 600,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, among other items.

In the trade and investment sectors, the number of Japanese businesses in Laos has gradually increased from a very few to 165



as of last year. Although the number has remained the same over the past two years because of the pandemic, there have been a number of Japanese businesspeople interested in doing business in Laos. I would like to take the opportunity to encourage those who are interested in investing in Laos to not give up their intentions. We will pass this dif-

ficult period together. *Ganbatte.*

I am confident that the traditional bond of friendship and good cooperation between the Lao PDR and Japan will continue to further expand and deepen. Once again, please allow me to convey my appreciation to the readers and offer my congratulations and best wishes to all Japanese people.

Laotian and Japanese officials hold a handover ceremony in August to mark the donation of medical equipment and over 600,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine by Japan to Laos in August.

EMBASSY OF THE LAO PDR



Japan and Laos sign an exchange of notes detailing a grant project from the Japanese government on July 15.

EMBASSY OF THE LAO PDR

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



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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



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Congratulations
to the Lao People's
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Walking with Lao friends

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