
Latvia National Day Special

Enormous potential in fast-growing market

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It is an honor to address you on the 106th anniversary of the Republic of Latvia. This day symbolizes not only our nation's freedom, but also the enduring spirit of resilience, unity and

courage. On Nov. 18, 1918, Latvia declared its independence, establishing itself as a free and sovereign nation, a place where its people could shape their own future. Today Latvia is a democratic, safe and dynamic country, a member of the European Union, NATO and the OECD.

Japan is Latvia's most important like-minded partner in the region. We have long enjoyed a strong friendship and broad exchanges of culture and people. Last year

was particularly active in our relations. It began with the historic first official visit of Latvia's foreign minister to Japan. We held active exchanges among government officials, businesses, researchers and artists. Events related to the Riga-Kobe 50th anniversary of sister city relations were also an important part of contacts between our countries. Next month, we are planning to open an honorary consulate in Nagoya and receive a delegation from Latvia's parliament, the Saeima, to strengthen cooperation.

I welcome expansion of Japanese business operations in Latvia. According to OECD forecasts, Latvia is the fastest-growing and most promising market in the Baltics. I expect further increases in trade and investment in sectors such as banking, infrastructure, defense, manufacturing and energy. Today's geopolitical reality provides an opportunity for our countries to ensure safe supply chains and production and to expand collaboration in information and communications technology,

startups and high-tech ventures.

As Latvia celebrates its independence, we must also acknowledge an existential battle unfolding before us — the unprovoked, illegal and brutal war of aggression launched by Russia against Ukraine. This war reminds us that the fight for freedom is an ongoing struggle. It requires the unwavering commitment of all those who value liberty, for an attack on one nation's sovereignty is an affront to the principles that form the foundation of peace, stability and prosperity worldwide. Latvia will continue to support Ukraine to victory.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my warmest greetings to all Latvians and friends of Latvia in Japan. May the friendship and cooperation between our countries bring prosperity and grow stronger each year!

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