

Laos National Day Special

Headed toward stronger, more strategic ties

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AMBASSADOR OF LAOS



Since the proclamation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on Dec. 2, 1975, the Lao PDR, under the leadership of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, has continued over the past

49 years to enjoy political stability, social order and economic growth, which have significantly contributed to reducing poverty and improving the living standards of the Lao people.

However, there are some current challenges, including high inflation and high living costs, among others. The government has been steadfastly implementing all necessary measures to improve the current economic situation, including improving investment conditions to attract more foreign direct investment and fighting the impacts of natural disasters, especially a massive flood

caused by Typhoon Yagi in September.

2024 is another significant year for the Lao PDR. Importantly, there is the success of our Association of Southeast Asian Nations chairmanship this year under the theme "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience," and the conclusion of the Visit Laos Year 2024 campaign, which saw approximately 2.94 million visitors arrive within the first nine months. Apart from that, gross domestic product growth this year is expected to reach at around 4.6%.

This year also marks the 69th anniversary of the long-standing friendly relations and good cooperation between our countries. Furthermore, this year is a remarkable year for our bilateral relations as the leaders and high-ranking officials of our countries have had exchanges both by telephone call and face to face.

Outstandingly, Prime Minister H.E. Shigeru Ishiba paid an official visit to the Lao PDR on the occasion of his attending the ASEAN-related summits and chaired the second Asia Zero Emission Community Leaders meeting in October. His visit highlighted the preparations for celebrat-

ing the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Laos and Japan, and plans to shift our bilateral relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership next year. As part of this momentum, the logo for the 70th anniversary was announced by our leaders.

At the same time, Japan has continued providing invaluable assistance to the Lao PDR. This year, four exchanges of notes on grant assistance projects, including the development of Vientiane International Airport (¥2.8 billion) and human resource development and other projects were signed. These projects will play a crucial role in supporting the Lao PDR's connectivity strategy with the region and the world, enabling us to transform from a landlocked country to a "land-linked" country and continue capacity-building for both Lao officials and students in many areas.

In terms of economic cooperation, the investment and trade volume between our countries is still relatively low. However, the numbers are gradually increasing. I've also seen much potential for cooperation particularly in manufacturing using green energy.



Far left: The Japanese government has decided to provide grant aid worth ¥2.8 billion to help develop Vientiane International Airport. Left: Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba (right) attends a welcome ceremony with Laotian Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone on Oct. 11. EMBASSY OF THE LAO PDR

Hydropower is one of our main exports. I think both sides could further work together, especially under Japan's AZEC initiative. Apart from this, the promotion of youth and other exchange programs, as well as direct flights between our countries, must be further enhanced and developed. Therefore, I'd like to take this opportunity to cordially invite all readers, businesses

and people from Japan to visit my country to explore more business opportunities.

Last but not least, I also invite all to join in organizing activities for a golden year of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries and the 60th anniversary of the Japanese government's dispatch of volunteers to the Lao PDR in 2025. I am confident that

by mutual trust, the traditional bond of friendship and good cooperation between the Lao PDR and Japan will be further expanded and deepened.

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

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to the Lao People's Democratic Republic on the Anniversary of Their National Day

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