

Kosovo National Day Special

Enjoying a close and respectful partnership

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On Feb. 17, 2008, a new European state — the Republic of Kosovo — was born. On that day, democratically elected representatives of the people of Kosovo voted in favor of the Declaration of Independence. Since then, Kosovo has focused on building stable democratic institutions, holding regular parliamentary elections and establishing a sustainable legal system.

Economically, Kosovo has made steady progress, reflected in gross domestic product growth, declining unemployment and a narrowing gap between exports and imports.

Internationally, Kosovo has established bilateral cooperative relations with 120 countries, including all members of the

Group of Seven leading industrialized nations.

Japan ranks among Kosovo's closest and most respected partners. Japan has played a vital role in Kosovo's post-war reconstruction since 1999, especially through Japan International Cooperation Agency projects. Japan's March 18, 2008, recognition of Kosovo — one of the first Asian countries to do so — holds a special place in the memories of Kosovars and remains a lasting symbol of our friendship.

Bilateral relations have been further strengthened through high-level visits, including those of Prime Minister Albin Kurti in 2022, Deputy Prime Minister Donika Gervalla-Schwarz in 2024 and President Vjosa Osmani in 2025. A milestone was reached in July 2024 with the first-ever visit to Kosovo by Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoko Kamikawa, marking the 15th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Kosovo was also honored by the visit of professor Hisashi Owada, former president of the

International Court of Justice, in 2025.

Japan's 2024 decision to waive visa requirements for diplomatic and official passport holders also strengthened our ties. Our participation in the Osaka Expo showcased the country as dynamic with a young population and growing investment potential. This was followed by Japanese business delegation visits organized by the Japan External Trade Organization.

The accreditation of Kosovo's first military defense attache in Tokyo, and the opening of Kosovo's Honorary Consulate in Yamanashi Prefecture are important milestones that were achieved last year.

Beyond diplomacy, Kosovo and Japan are united by shared values — respect for the nation, social responsibility and strong intergenerational bonds — underpinning an enduring friendship between our peoples.

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