

# Armenia national day

## Positive developments highlight friendly relationship

Grant Pogosyan  
AMBASADOR OF ARMENIA

On Sept. 21, 1991, following the result of a nationwide referendum, the Republic of Armenia was declared an independent state. On the occasion of the 24th Independence Day of the Republic of Armenia, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to my compatriots and to all of our friends in Japan and elsewhere in the world.



On March 2, 1992, at the 46th session of the U.N. General Assembly, together with 18 other new nations, Armenia became a U.N. member state. Earlier that year the Republic of Armenia has acceded to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and by swiftly gaining recognition from the world's nations has become a member of more than 40 major international organizations, including the Council of Europe (January 2001), the World Trade Organization (February 2003) and since January, the Eurasian Economic Union. Even though some serious tasks still remain to be accomplished, over the past 24 years the modern Armenian state has shown definite progress in nation building and has demonstrated significant achievements in the economic and social spheres.

Japan was among the first nations to recognize the new Armenian state and this year we celebrate the 23rd anniversary

of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. Since the beginning of our bilateral affairs, Armenia and Japan have been observing a truly friendly relationship, highlighted by many positive developments and reciprocal visits, including a landmark visit by the president of Armenia to Japan in June 2012. With the generous help of the Japanese government, Armenia has carried out several official development assistance projects, which are significantly supporting the economic development of the country. Our citizens are grateful to the people of Japan for the substantial assistance, which in total is worth close to \$500 million.

In recent years we have witnessed significant advancement in our cultural and political relations at both the state and public levels that are indisputably contributing to further strengthening our ties. The parliamentary friendship leagues in both countries are well organized and actively involved in partnership dialogue. "Armenia Culture Week," which was recently organized by our embassy in Tokyo, was among the numerous intercultural events promoted by both Japanese and Armenian organizations, individuals, scientists, musicians and artists. Such events, along with media publications, as well as radio and TV programs about Armenia, are inspiring more and more people to visit our country. We are happy that Armenia is gradually becoming a tourist and business destination for our Japanese friends. More than 10,000 travelers from Japan visit Armenia

every year — a vast increase since June 2010 when our embassy was inaugurated in Tokyo. This year, on Jan. 1 the Japanese embassy started its operations in Yerevan and a few months later, the first resident ambassador to Armenia H.E. Eiji Taguchi began his mission in our country. These developments will certainly strengthen our ties and reinforce our partnership in all areas.

Armenia was the first nation to adopt Christianity as its state religion in 301 A.D. and the biblical Mt. Ararat rising on the horizon of "Noah's Land" is a major symbol of Armenia and all Armenians around the world. The millennia-long history of Armenia records periods of powerful kingdoms and independent statehoods, centuries of existence under foreign powers, as well as tragic chapters that forced many to leave their homeland simply for the sake of survival. As a result, numerous Armenians have migrated around the globe creating a unique situation for Armenia, which now has a diaspora 2.5 times the size of its population of 3 million. This year marks the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, a tragedy that killed 1.5 million of our people and created millions of refugees. Many countries, organizations and individuals commemorated this tragic act against humanity, extending their sympathy to all Armenians, the vast majority of whom are descendants of genocide survivors. Being a strong advocate for universal human rights and for the peaceful development of all nations, Armenia is actively supporting every

effort of the international community toward peaceful resolution of conflicts and strongly condemns terrorism and killings, past or present.

Armenian people today are striving to build a modern country that prospers in the spirit of democracy and free-market economy. Impartial assessments reveal the country's considerable advancement in the ranking of world economies. In the World Bank's 2015 ease of doing business ranking, Armenia placed 45th, and, remarkably, is ranked the fourth-best country in the world for starting a business. We have seen significant progress also in human rights and media freedom. According to the 2015 World Press Freedom Index, Armenia has achieved one of the best rankings in the region and among former Soviet republics. Continuous improvements in the customs and business procedures are making Armenia more and more attractive for foreign investment and the country offers great business potential that can be further explored, particularly by the Japanese industry and entrepreneurs.

Armenia has adopted a diversified economic policy that supports the development of various industries such as high technology, chemical engineering, pharmaceuticals, mining, agriculture, wineries and tourism. Once called the "Silicon Valley of the Soviet Union," Armenia has firmly established itself as a regional hub on the world IT map. Strong academic programs with specializations in IT and basic sciences that are

training world-class specialists in computer science, physics and mathematics have revitalized the industry during the past decade. Moreover, highly competitive labor costs have attracted many multinational companies to outsource their operations to Armenia. Almost 500 companies in high technology with headquarters in North America, Europe, Russia and other parts of the world are operating in Armenia, some of which, particularly in semiconductor design, have chosen Armenia as their major offshore operation hub. The IT industry in Armenia has shown annual growth rates averaging between 25 and 30 percent in the past several years. For those who read Japanese, I would like to recommend the recently published book by Dr. Tsugio Makimoto, "Armenia as IT Country." Makimoto, who is often called "Mr. Semiconductor," is the former president of Hitachi Semiconductor. He is a renowned semiconductor industry specialist, author of numerous publications and the so-called Makimoto Wave. Makimoto was



"Armenia as IT Country" by Tsugio Makimoto EMBASSY OF ARMENIA

a recipient of the prestigious 2013 Global IT Award, which the President of Armenia presents annually to an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to humanity through advancing the world of IT. On this celebratory occasion, and on behalf of my country, I am privileged to express our gratitude, respect and friendship to Japan, wishing peace and prosperity to the people of Japan and all readers of The Japan Times around the world.



Tatevi Monastery was built in the ninth century and is a popular tourist destination. EMBASSY OF ARMENIA

Congratulations  
to the People  
of  
the Republic  
of Armenia  
on  
the 24th Anniversary  
of  
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JAPAN TOBACCO INC.

JT Bldg., 2-1, Toranomon 2-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8422, JAPAN  
Phone: (03) 3582-3111 Fax: (03) 5572-1463 URL: <http://www.jt.com>

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E-mail: [sun@sunrealty.co.jp](mailto:sun@sunrealty.co.jp) <http://sunrealty.jp/>