

# Kazakhstan National Day

## Summits facilitate across-the-board cooperation

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AMBASSADOR OF KAZAKHSTAN

From Nov. 6 to 9, the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev paid an official visit to Japan. The event was very significant, since it took place on the eve of two important dates — the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries.

As during previous visits to Japan, the program of the visit started with a traditional meeting with Japan's Emperor Akihito, with whom the president has developed a warm friendship over the years.

The president held talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for the seventh time, which is unprecedented in the history of bilateral relations, and which clearly demonstrates the high level of Kazakh-Japanese cooperation.

During the talks, the parties signed documents, including the joint statement "On Special Strategic Partnership Between Kazakhstan and Japan in the Age of Asia's Prosperity." Our leaders agreed to continue active political dialogue, increase contacts at all levels, ensure security of the region, facilitate trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, as well as collectively work against challenges of the modern world.

In general, looking back at the 25-year history of relations with Japan, it should be noted that Kazakhstan has paid great attention to the development of Kazakh-Japanese cooperation from the very first days of independence, and in particular to its economic component. I remember the arrival in Kazakhstan of the first trade and economic mission headed by Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mitsubishi Corp. Shinroku Morohashi in June 1993 that included the heads of 40 major Japanese multinational companies. The Japanese businessmen felt confident in the social and economic reforms of the young independent state and decided to expand their investment activities. Later, at the meeting of the captains of Japanese business in the course of the president's official visit to

Japan in 1994 and 1999 the representatives of political and business circles of Japan were always impressed by the vision and power of persuasion of our president.

Within the first years of independence, through official development assistance, Japanese companies implemented in Kazakhstan projects totaling \$1.15 billion. The government of Japan granted financial aid in the amount of approximately \$65.4 million, as well as technical support amounting to \$67.8 million.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance for the economy of Kazakhstan of such projects as the construction of Astana International Airport and a network of railways and roads; the modernization of energy facilities; the building of equipment for medical, educational, cultural and sport institutions; as well as the advanced training of multi-skilled Kazakh personnel at the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Japan Cooperation Centre, Petroleum and others.

Today, the cooperation between the two countries is focused on the conjugation of two economies, two new economic policies — Nurly Zhol and Abe-nomics — through the effective use of the economic benefits of Kazakhstan and Japan. These policies pay great attention to the widespread introduction of Japanese technology and know-how.

Against this background, annual bilateral trade figures are between \$1.5 and \$2 billion. Last year, despite the slowdown of the global economy, trade turnover between our countries amounted to \$1.5 billion (exports of \$858.6 million and imports of \$584.7 million). From January to July 2016, the amount reached \$741 million (exports of \$351.1 million and imports of \$390.5 million).

Currently, there are 74 branches and representative offices of companies with Japanese involvement in Kazakhstan in areas such as oil, gas, petrochemistry, metallurgy, finance, mining, automotive wholesale, telecommunications, equipment wholesale, timber stockpiling, logistics, medicine, agriculture and more.

A landmark agreement was signed between the government of Kazakhstan and the Toyota Motor Corp. in February 2013 on the start of production of Toyota



Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev (left) meets with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his official visit to Japan in November. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

Fortuner SUVs at Saryarka Avto-Prom in Kostanay. During the recent visit to Japan, our president took part in the ceremony of remote launch via teleconference for the Tokyo Rope Almaty plant for manufacturing steel products in Kazakhstan. Tokyo Rope is the leader in manufacturing high-end steel wire cables, bridge cables and engineering products.

The flow of Japanese investment into the Kazakh economy since independence has reached around \$10 billion. However, the figures do not reflect the existing potential for cooperation. Recently, the interest of Japanese companies in operating in Kazakh free economic zones has increased in line with their interest in using the transit potential of Kazakhstan for transporting cargo, including through the use of our terminals in foreign markets. About 25 joint investment projects are under implementation between our countries valued at more than \$4 billion.

Promising cooperation vectors include collaboration between the Astana International Financial Centre and the Japan Securities Dealers Association after they signed a memorandum of cooperation during the president's visit to Japan. Also we expect further development of

partnerships with the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the Japanese Financial Service Agency and other financial organizations.

The business communities of both parties participated in the sixth meeting of the Joint Commission of Government and Private Sectors of Kazakhstan and Japan on Economic Cooperation on Nov. 7 and 8 in Tokyo. As the result of the business forum, 15 trade agreements were signed for a total value of \$1.2 billion.

In 2016, Japanese economic organizations and companies demonstrated their readiness to take the most active participation in the work of EXPO 2017, to be held next year in Astana. Japan's pavilion, with the motto "Smart Mix with Technology — Experience and Challenges" will be the largest one. An agreement on Japan's participation in EXPO 2017 was signed during our president's visit in November.

Another important direction of bilateral relations is close partnership in the field of nuclear nonproliferation. Japan has supported the initiatives of Kazakhstan's president in this regard from the very first days of independence. It is worth mentioning that Japan acted as a co-author of the U.N. resolution on the Semipalatinsk region, and

initiated the Tokyo International Conference on the problems of Semipalatinsk in 1999.

In 2009, Japan also appeared as the only developed country to become the co-author of the U.N. resolution that declared Aug. 29 the International Day against Nuclear Tests. In 2013, honorary guests at the presentation of Nazarbayev's initiative, The ATOM Project, in Tokyo and throughout Japan were the wife of the Japanese prime minister, Akie Abe, and the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It is no surprise that in February 2015 during the meeting of Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) Kazakhstan and Japan were elected as co-chairs of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT for 2015-2017, which took place in September 2015 at the U.N. in New York.

In October 2015 and April this year, Nazarbayev and Abe published two important political statements in support of the treaty.

Kazakhstan was elected as a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council for 2017-2018 and next year will jointly work with Japan. Our leaders agreed to closely cooperate on building a nuclear-free world.

On Nov. 8, Nazarbayev, the first among post-Soviet leaders, addressed the National Diet of Japan and spoke about international security measures taken by Kazakhstan noting the importance of joint efforts aimed at building a world free of nuclear threats. He drew participants' attention to his manifesto "The World. The 21st Century" delivered at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington. Our president underlined the risk of using nuclear weapons is much higher now than at the end of the Cold War.

Considering the similar history of the Kazakh and Japanese people and their common aims to build a nuclear weapon-free



Above: the logo of Astana EXPO 2017; below: the logo for the 25th Anniversary of Independence

world, our president for the first time visited Hiroshima to pay tribute to the memory of the victims of the 1945 nuclear bombing. "The song 'Zaman-ai' sung today by young Hiroshima residents is a symbol of our nations' spiritual closeness in an effort to rid the world of the nuclear evil," he said. In Hiroshima, the president urged world leaders to renounce nuclear testing to prevent another nuclear tragedy.

The official visit of the president was rich with events of a political and economic nature and aimed at attracting the Japanese investment and advanced technologies Kazakhstan needs to implement the modernization plans, to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the top 30 leading economies of the world. The visit also facilitated further strengthening of friendship between the leaders of both countries as an important precondition to bring strategic cooperation to the new level.



Astana is a symbol of the dynamic development of Kazakhstan. The master plan of the city was designed by Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

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