

Kyrgyz National Day

Building further economic, cultural alliances

CHINGIZ AIDARBEKOV

AMBASSADOR OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



I'm delighted to greet the readers of The Japan Times and our compatriots on the occasion of the 26th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Kyrgyz Republic.

This year is also remarkable because

we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and Japan. A number of major events being held in our countries are dedicated to this occasion. Additionally, key issues were discussed during the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Erlan Abdyldaev to Japan in March.

The Kyrgyz Republic and Japan have achieved dynamic and positive relationships, sharing common values. Since the beginning of independence, Japan is one of our most reliable friends and I am happy to state that our countries constantly and effectively cooperate on a political level. The official visit of Prime Minister H.E. Shinzo Abe to the Kyrgyz Republic in October 2015 raised our relationships to a new level of partnership.

Today, our countries have focused their efforts on issues related to elevating our bilateral economic ties to a new level. One of the strategic directions is collaboration on the promotion of quality infrastructure through

disaster management and prevention, including combating natural disasters, as well as cooperation in the transportation sector.

Moreover, the Kyrgyz-Japanese Forum on Quality Infrastructure conducted on Oct. 5 created an important basis for activation of trade and economic cooperation between the private sector and government in both countries, with many large Japanese companies participating in this meeting. Following the forum, a number of local enterprises expressed their interest in implementing projects in the Kyrgyz Republic and some of them are planned to be discussed by both sides during the upcoming second Forum on Quality Infrastructure in Tokyo in September.

Today we are expecting that some Japanese companies will begin working in the Kyrgyz Republic. In general, an appropriate base and opportunities have been created, including a reliable bilateral partnership; the attractiveness of the economy of the rapidly growing Kyrgyz Republic; multifaceted possibilities of cooperation; and our membership in the Eurasian Economic Union. I am pleased with the decision of Tokyo Rope Mfg. Co. to open its branch, Tokyo Rope Construction, in Bishkek to fulfill overseas projects using Kyrgyz engineers. Sawada Holdings Co. bought a controlling stake of the Kyrgyz-kommercbank OJSC in the Kyrgyz Republic just few month ago. This is a positive signal for Japanese businesses to come to the Kyrgyz Republic.

Dear friends, this year is significant for the Kyrgyz Republic in light of the presidential elections scheduled for Oct. 15. Some crucial features such as mandatory use of new technology distinguish these elections. I would like to highlight the technical support of the Japanese side in preparation for the forthcoming presidential elections, as well as our parliamentary elections in 2015.

I would like to note that within the framework of celebrating the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, we are planning to hold a number of cultural events in Tokyo such as ethnic festivals featuring the participation of Kyrgyz artists and music groups, exhibitions, culture days and open houses. We are pleased to welcome visitors to these events and information on the concerts can be found at <http://kyrgyzkomuz.iinaa.net>.

In the framework of fulfilling our "Smart Country" project, we've implemented the "Electronic Visa of the Kyrgyz Republic" system from Sept. 1. The visa system allows foreign citizens to obtain entry-exit tourist or business visas for the Kyrgyz Republic for up to 90 days via the internet.

At the same time, Japanese citizens are able to enjoy visa-free entry into the Kyrgyz Republic for up to 60 days. Those interested in visiting our beautiful mountainous country are always welcome.

In conclusion, I am pleased to congratulate the citizens of my country and our friends on the independence day of the Kyrgyz Republic.