

Belarus National Day Special

Active cooperation ongoing in digital sector

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AMBASSADOR OF BELARUS



On July 3 the Belarusian people celebrate their national holiday, Independence Day.

We sincerely congratulate our compatriots and Japanese friends of Belarus on this holi-

day. We would like to express our special gratitude to His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito and members of the Imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the Cabinet of ministers, Diet and, personally, Head of the Japan-Belarus Interparliamentary Friendship League Hiromichi Watanabe, as well as governors and mayors of cities who cooperate with our country, for their support of Belarus in the international arena and their valuable contribution to bilateral cooperation.

The Republic of Belarus pursues a multifocal foreign policy founded on the principles of equality of countries and non-

interference in domestic affairs. As a co-founder and active member of the United Nations, Belarus actively supports diplomatic efforts as the only viable way to settle any international conflict.

The economy of Belarus has experienced a steady recovery after the global economic crisis. In 2017, the country's gross domestic product grew by about 3 percent and is expected to continue growing this year. Belarus' exports increased by 26 percent globally, including to Japan by 41.4 percent.

Political dialogue between the leaders of Belarus and Japan, inter-parliamentary cooperation, interregional and humanitarian ties and direct business contacts of the two nations are the main drivers of Belarus-Japanese relations.

The first Belarusian-Japanese Economic Forum, held on May 10 and 11 in Tokyo and Osaka, was instrumental in promoting the opportunities of bilateral trade and investment opportunities. The Minister of Health of the Republic of Belarus Valery Malashko met with his Japanese counterpart, Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare Katsunobu Kato in Tokyo and signed a

memorandum of cooperation.

The digital sector is growing rapidly in Belarus and exported \$1 billion in software services last year. The national policy is focused on transforming Belarus into a sophisticated IT nation. The country's companies actively cooperate with Japanese partners. The recently established contacts with the Japan Association of New Economy open up new opportunities for bilateral synergies in the digital area.

Overall, more than 60 countries invest in Belarus, including Great Britain, the U.S., China, Russia, Turkey and Poland. Belarus ranks 38th out of 190 countries in the World Bank's 2018 Doing Business Report.

Belarus cooperates with international institutions on privatization of large state-owned enterprises, industrial innovation and large-scale infrastructural modernization. Successful investment stories include the Great Stone Industrial Park in a Minsk suburb and the Japan-Belarus Smart Industrial Zone in the Mogilev region. We invite Japanese businesses to invest in industrial robotics, manufacturing of electric vehicles and related infrastructure, musical instruments, pharmaceutical and cosmetic goods

and more.

The Belarus-Japan cooperation has been actively developing at the regional level. This year, thanks to the assistance of the Japan-Belarus Friendship Dialogue Association, a number of bilateral economic events were held in Gifu, Tokyo and Uruma in Okinawa, as well as other locales, giving additional impetus to our cooperation.

We are grateful to the Japanese government and the people of Japan for the humanitarian assistance they have been extending to Belarus for many years, including through the Grassroots Program. Our country, for its part, invites children from the disaster-hit prefectures of Fukushima and Miyagi for recreation in the summer.

Upcoming meetings and talks in Tokyo, visits from business missions, presentations of economic and investment opportunities of the regions, as well as joint efforts to popularize the two countries' cultural heritages, including preserving and perpetuating the memory of Iosif Goshkevich, a well-known diplomat from Belarus, will contribute to further strengthening of the cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Japan.



From left: Ambassador Ruslan Esin, Foreign Minister Taro Kono and Japan-Belarus Interparliamentary Friendship League Head Hiromichi Watanabe in Tokyo on Dec. 22, 2017. EMBASSY OF BELARUS

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

Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Belarus
on the Occasion of Their Independence Day

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