

Indonesia Independence Day Special

Bilateral ties foster positive changes

ARIFIN TASRIF

AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA



Seventy-three years after its independence, Indonesia remains steadfast in its aspiration to become an independent, united and prosperous nation, as envisioned by our founding fathers and

proclaimed in the nation's ideology, *Pancasila* (five principles). This recipe for unity, democracy and humanity is what defines us and drives us. Since 1945, "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*," or "Unity in Diversity" remains an affirmation that reflects the very fabric that binds Indonesia as a pluralistic nation, with a rich tapestry of ethnicities, tribes, cultures and religions.

Indonesia's principles of peaceful coexistence, as well as freedom and eternal peace, is also reflected in our foreign policies and global relations. Indonesia works persistently to contribute to the establishment of world order, through various bilateral, regional and multilateral platforms; and through the work of its 132 missions in 95 countries around the world.

Indonesia and its fellow Association of Southeast Asian Nations member countries continue to commit to a nuclear-free region, closer economic integration, sustainable development, plus safeguards toward our environment and our cultural heritage. Since its early years, Indonesia also has made use of prominent regional and multilateral forums to voice our free and active foreign policy to reach our goals and achieve world peace.

In the last six years, Indonesia has hosted a wide range of international dialogues; the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's Conference on the Role of Women, the



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Asian-African Conference's 60th anniversary, the Indian Ocean Rim Association Leaders' Summit and the World Conference on the Creative Economy. This year, we will host the MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Australia) Foreign Ministers Meeting, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's Annual Meeting, the annual Bali Democracy Forum and the Our Ocean Conference in line with our vision as a Global Maritime Fulcrum.

We wish to convey our gratitude to members of the United Nations who have voted for us to resume our position as a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. This is also consistent with Indonesia's "Vision of 4,000 Peacekeepers 2015-2019," that so far has placed Indonesia eighth out of 124 contributing countries, with 2,694 individuals, including roughly 80 women, assigned as peacekeeping personnel, in nine U.N. peacekeeping missions around the world. Indonesia thus continues its active role in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace-building.

Since successfully overcoming the political and financial crisis in 1998, Indonesia remains resilient and continues to grow as the largest economy in the Southeast Asian region, now with a population of more



than 265 million people—the fourth largest in the world. In the last 10-year period, the country's gross domestic product at purchasing power parity also grew significantly, from around \$843.7 billion in 2007 to around \$3.24 trillion in 2017.

Indonesia not only has abundant natural resources, but also has a potential labor force of around 132 million people. In 2035, it is projected that the size of the workforce in the country will grow around 67.9 percent to 306 million people, which makes Indonesia an ideal place for manufacturing and investment, plus an ideal partner for Japan's specific needs.

In the investment sector, total foreign investment in Indonesia in 2017 was around \$50 billion, mainly in mining, real estate and the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. While in trade, total foreign trade of Indonesia in 2017 was about \$325.8 billion, an increase from 2016's \$280.8 billion.

To further boost foreign trade and investment, as well as to improve the ease of doing business in Indonesia, since 2015, President Joko Widodo has launched 16 economic packages that include providing a faster investment licensing service, simplifying export-import permits and financing for

small and medium-sized enterprises, improving logistic competitiveness, launching 73 new logistic centers for industrial areas and special economic zones, developing a number of infrastructure projects across the country and introducing 10 new tourism destinations.

Indonesia also continues to strengthen economic partnership with various countries. In 2017, the government of Indonesia signed 78 international agreements in the economic sector, including in trade, investment, finance, technical cooperation and double taxation avoidance. In the same year, 27 trade negotiations were carried out to reach—among others—a comprehensive partnership with Australia and a free trade agreement with Chile.

Indonesia's relations with Japan are often viewed as a yardstick with which to measure reciprocal benefits, and the approximately 5,000 Indonesian students studying in Japan are testament to the younger generation's enthusiasm in reinforcing the future of the bilateral relations.

with Africa, South and Central Asia, as well as Latin America. As an embodiment of Indonesia's commitment to strengthening economic engagement with African countries, Indonesia initiated the first Indone-



Indonesian Ambassador Arifin Tasrif speaks in Tokyo at an Aug. 13 ceremony for Japanese athletes ahead of the 2018 Asian Games that kick off in Indonesia on Aug. 18. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA

sia-Africa Forum, held from April 10-11, in Bali. The forum was attended by more than 500 participants, including around 240 delegates from 46 African countries, international organizations and development partners. The forum generated business ties worth over \$1.8 billion.

Meanwhile, Indonesia-Japan relations grow stronger each year and are now in their 60th year. We have celebrated this milestone with our many partners in a variety of ways, including exhibitions and a cultural performance of Indonesian and Japanese students that was graced by the presence of Their Highnesses Prince Akishino, Princess Kiko and their family. We have also spread the message of the 60th anniversary by taking part in local festivals in Sapporo, Fukuoka, Hiroshima and Kesennuma.

Our recent Festival Indonesia at Hibiya Park in Tokyo was also supported enthusiastically by many of the performers who came from 11 different provinces in Indonesia. An art troupe from Kesennuma performed as well, mesmerizing the audience with their skills. Indonesian cultural groups are often invited to perform or even teach in Japan, and many Japanese choose to learn *wayang orang* (classical dance), *angklung* (bamboo instrument) and even *gamelan* (traditional bronze percussion instruments).

Indonesia's relations with Japan are often viewed as a yardstick with which to measure reciprocal benefits, and the approximately 5,000 Indonesian students studying in Japan are testament to the younger generation's enthusiasm in reinforcing the future of the bilateral relations. Meanwhile, around 1,100 Japanese athletes attending the 2018 Asian Games, opening on Aug. 18, show Japan's solidarity toward Indonesia specifically and Asia in general. Japan even has an athlete participating in *pencak silat*, a branch of traditional Indonesian martial arts, despite this being the first time it's been included in the Asian Games.

All of Indonesia's bilateral relations have been about bringing positive change to each other and the regions around us. Our relations with Japan become stronger because we complement each other through a mutually beneficial partnership. I hope the younger generation can share this sentiment and build an even stronger foundation for our relations. I pray that throughout the next 60 years our two countries' relations will grow greatly and bring benefit to the peace and prosperity to the region and the world.

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

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the Republic of Indonesia
and the 60th Anniversary of
Diplomatic Relations



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Today, Indonesians all over the world commemorate the 73rd Anniversary of our Independence Day. This is an occasion to reflect upon the long path of struggle and sacrifice of our founding fathers, who have paved the way toward a strong, peaceful, democratic and prosperous nation.

Through our independence, and as promulgated in our constitution, Indonesia continues to play its active role in regional and global affairs. In close collaboration with its partners, Indonesia aspires to continuously become a part of the solution to our common challenges.

In this regard, Japan has always been one of Indonesia's strategic and most reliable partners in development and peace.

This year presents a strategic momentum for Indonesia and Japan as both countries celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Since 1958, and as strategic partners, Indonesia and Japan have enjoyed solid and exceptional bilateral relations and cooperation in diverse sectors.

Throughout the six decades of bilateral relations, economic cooperation has been exceptionally significant. Currently, Japan is the second-largest investor in Indonesia and one of the main trade partners. In 2017, Japan's investment in Indonesia reached \$5 billion. In the same year, the trade between Indonesia and Japan also increased by 13.54 percent from 2016, reaching a remarkable \$33.03 billion.

Indonesia and Japan are also working together on various infrastructure projects such as the Jakarta Mass Rapid Transit, Patimban Port and the development of six of Indonesia's outer islands.

Furthermore, it must be fully understood

that a strong and effective bilateral relationship does not work in a vacuum. The relationship between Indonesia and Japan is a true example of this.

Throughout the years, Indonesia and Japan's partnership has not only contributed to the prosperity of the people of both countries, but also contributed toward peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond. The Indonesia-Japan partnership has been instrumental in building a solid regional architecture for cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, including through various Association of Southeast Asian Nations-led mechanisms.

Indonesia and Japan are also no strangers to collaboration beyond the economic domain. Take the Third Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development for instance. Both Indonesia and Japan have been able to mobilize regional support to provide much-needed economic and development assistance for Palestinians.

Similar cooperation has also been reflected through various processes and initiatives at the global level, including in the United Nations, all aimed at maintaining peace and stability. As an elected non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council (2019-2020), Indonesia stands ready to work more closely with our friends, including Japan.

The key challenge ahead is to ensure that Indonesia and Japan continuously enhance their mutual cooperation as trusted partners. This is particularly important in the economic domain, where a win-win strategy must be pursued, especially against the rise of protectionism.

To that end, Indonesia and Japan must redouble common efforts to maintain a fair

and open trading system, regionally and globally.

The changing strategic environments in recent times have had a significant bearing on Indonesia-Japan bilateral relations. These changes include a massive geopolitical shift that is now taking place in the Indo-Pacific region with ensuing implications in terms of economy, politics and even security.

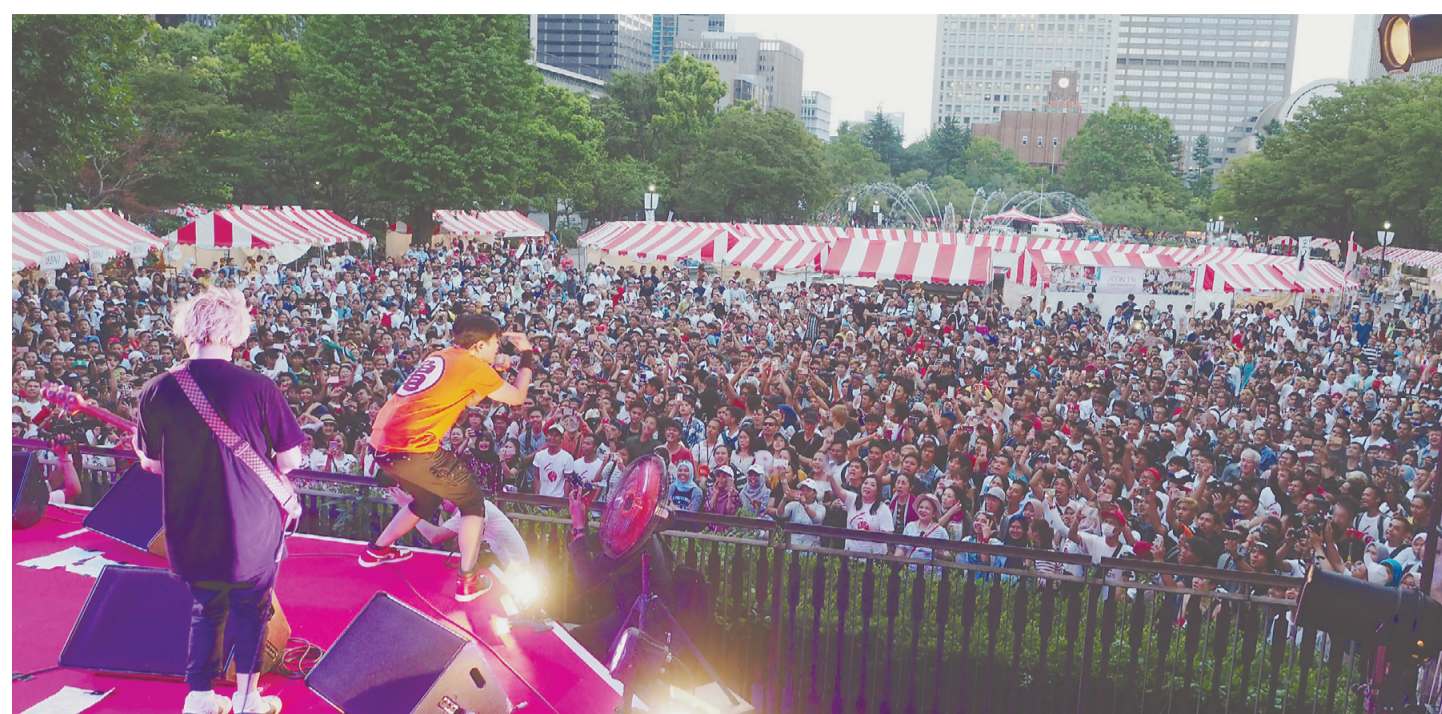
Therefore, it is just natural and strategic if both countries begin to pursue similar investments in the increasingly important Indo-Pacific region. The success in building a peaceful, stable, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific region would spell tangible contributions to the regional and global ecosystem of peace, stability and prosperity.

In the end, it is fitting to envision the bilateral relationship in the next decades as one that also benefits the region and the world. A collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region would be a good start.

Beyond government-to-government contacts, it is heartening to see the growing people-to-people relations as the very foundation of friendship between the two nations. Our relations have flourished in many areas, including education, art and culture and we have seen increasing numbers of visitors and exchange visits from both countries.

Yet, the relations are not to be taken for granted, especially in terms of people-to-people contact. It is imperative to continue encouraging our people, especially the youth, to stay connected and learn from each other. That is the seed of mutual understanding, which serves as a perfect shield from unfounded hatred, intolerance and prejudice.

Finally, the close friendship and cooperation between Indonesia and Japan is well-reflected by *benang merah* (the red string of fate) or *akai ito* in Japanese. It symbolizes a heart-to-heart relationship based on mutual trust and respect of working and cooperating as equal partners; that would be the perfect basis for a lasting friendship and partnership.



GIGI, one of Indonesia's most popular rock bands, performs at Festival Indonesia 2018 in Tokyo's Hibiya Park on July 29. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA

Natural allies share similar values

TARO KONO
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN



On the auspicious occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia, on behalf of the government and people of Japan, allow me to send my warmest congratulations to the government and people of the Republic of Indonesia.

Taking this opportunity, let me express my deepest condolences for families of the victims of severe earthquakes in Lombok on July 29 and Aug. 5. Our deepest sympathy goes to the government and people of Indonesia. I sincerely pray for a quick recovery and reconstruction of the affected areas. The government of Japan stands ready to support the government of Indonesia by all means in its emergency efforts.

Japan, as a long-standing friend of Indonesia, is happy and proud to witness an Indonesia that is increasingly more prosperous and plays an important role as a major country in the international community.

Japan and Indonesia are strategic partners that share fundamental values such as democracy and the rule of law. Many of our national interests overlap, making us natural partners in facing the challenges in the region and beyond.

Therefore, it is not surprising that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries, Japan has consistently walked hand in hand with Indonesia,

facing good times and bad times together.

This year, the people of Jakarta will watch as the Mass Rapid Transit, the first subway mass transit system in Indonesia, nears its completion. This project is being supported by Indonesian workers using Japanese technology. Today, we have countless nurses and care workers from Indonesia working in Japan, helping us cope with our aging society.

I am sure that many people in Indonesia still remember the helping hand that Japan

extended when Indonesia

was struck by devastating natural disasters in the past. Equally, the people of Japan will never forget the assistance rendered to Japan by our brothers and sisters in Indonesia when the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami struck Japan.

These are just a few examples of how our two peoples are working together to achieve something good in our respective countries.

As we say in the Indonesian language, we are *sahabat* (close friends) in the real sense of the word. Although we are separated by vast seas, we are always close at heart.

Coincidentally, this year marks not only the 73rd year since the independence of Indonesia, but also the 60th year since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. Many events, supported not only by our two governments,

but also by the private sectors and societies of both countries, are being held throughout the year. I am confident that through participating in these events, we will be able to witness how our friendship extends to all walks of society and runs deep in our hearts. Let us celebrate this year together to reinforce the already strong ties that exist between us.

However, my desires go beyond that. I hope that this year will be a year in which we can together reflect on our past relationship, and identify the shape of our relationship in the decades to come. It is easy to imagine that Japan and Indonesia will still be best friends in 2045 — the 100th anniversary of Indonesia's independence. But can you imagine what could be achieved for the peace and prosperity of the world if Japan and an even stronger Indonesia worked together as best friends in the future? Can you imagine your personal role in that wonderful partnership?

Be it in the areas of business, culture or security, it is up to the people of our two countries, especially those from the younger generation, to shape our relationship in the decades to come. So on this day of the 73rd anniversary of Indonesia's independence, in the 60th year of the friendship between Japan and Indonesia, I call upon each one of us to reflect on what we can do to make sure that we can be even better friends in the future. I, for my part, am committed to doing my best as the foreign minister of Japan, working together with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia H.E. Retno Marsudi, to make sure that is the case.

Selamat Hari Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia yang ke-73! Congratulations on the 73rd anniversary of the independence of Indonesia.



Indonesia boasts rich biodiversity that includes Komodo dragons. These lizards can grow to be a maximum of three meters long and are only found on Komodo Island and several other Indonesian islands. JERRY AURUM

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on the 73rd Anniversary of Independence
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