

# Vietnam National Day Special

## Socioeconomic achievements further relations

**NGUYEN QUOC CUONG**  
AMBASSADOR OF VIETNAM



On Sept. 2, 1945, Vietnam proclaimed independence and, for the first time in its history stretching across thousands of years, emerged on the world map as an independent

and sovereign state. Looking back at the country's development over the past seven decades, we have every reason to be proud of the remarkable socio-economic achievements recorded that helped transform Vietnam into a market-based economy, as well as a vibrant and dynamic society with hard-working, optimistic and hospitable people.

As the government is fully committed to sustainable growth and global economic integration, Vietnam has embarked on the second wave of

reforms with a focus on improving business environments, reforming state-owned enterprises and increasing financial sector transparency, among other matters. This process has brought about tangible and concrete results.

In 2017, Vietnam's economic performance was resilient, reflecting robust export-oriented manufacturing, as well as strong domestic demand. Gross domestic product growth reached 6.81 percent, the fastest expansion in the past 10 years, while the inflation rate stood at 3.5 percent; foreign direct investment inflows amounted to \$36 billion; and total trade volume exceeded \$400 billion. Also worthy of note is a recent survey conducted by the Japan External Trade Organization that shows that Vietnam has become the second most attractive foreign destination for Japanese investors.

Last year, Vietnam successfully chaired the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, at which a new course of development for the whole region in the years ahead

has been charted, with key priorities such as inclusive growth, innovation and strengthening small and medium enterprises among others. Together with Japan, Vietnam has also been supportive of multilateral trading systems such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Our celebration of the 73rd anniversary of the National Day this year comes coincidentally with the 45th commemoration of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Japan.

This bilateral relationship continues its upward trend with frequent exchanges of high-level meetings among the top leaders of the two countries. In May, President Tran Dai Quang and his spouse made a state visit to Japan. The visit was in return for the historic state visit to Vietnam by Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko last year. Both state visits have helped deepen and bring the extensive strategic partnership between our two countries

to new heights.

Economic, trade and investment linkages continue to be the key drivers of bilateral relations. Last year, Japan reclaimed its place as the top foreign investor in Vietnam with a total capital of around \$9.11 billion, quadrupling the 2016 figure. Bilateral trade reached about \$33.5 billion, an annual increase of 11 percent. Currently, there are approximately 300,000 Vietnamese people in Japan — of those, around 75,000 are students and roughly 140,000 are trainees. In the long-term, the emergence of a strong Vietnamese community in Japan would constitute an increasingly important factor contributing to the socioeconomic development in both countries and further promote people-to-people connectivity.

Vietnam and Japan share many strategic interests in regional and international issues. As Vietnam has recently assumed the role of coordinator of Japan-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2018–2021 and



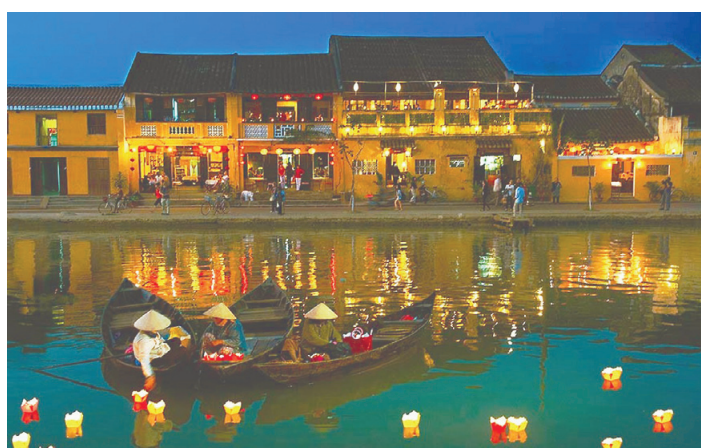
President Tran Dai Quang and his wife Nguyen Thi Hien attend a welcoming ceremony while Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko stand by in a garden on the Imperial Palace grounds in Tokyo on May 30. EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

will be ASEAN chair in 2020, I strongly believe that the two sides will have many more opportunities to work closely with each other to further promote our shared interests.

On a personal note, as I am completing my ambassadorial tenure and about to leave Japan, I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude and sincerest thanks to all my good colleagues and friends in all of the

47 prefectures that I have visited. Both my wife and I have fallen in love with beautiful Japan and we will cherish the fond memories of the warm friendship and wholehearted support that you have generously extended to us. Japan has indeed become our second home.

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



Top: Rice terrace in the town of Sa Pa in Lao Cai province in northwest Vietnam. Above: Old town of Hoi An in central Vietnam is located on the banks of Thu Bon River. EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

**Congratulations**  
to the people of  
the Socialist Republic of Vietnam  
on the Occasion of the 73rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day




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