

Kazakhstan National Day Special

Partnership heightened by mutual interests

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On Dec. 16, Kazakhstan once again celebrates its independence. Twenty-eight years ago, first President Nursultan Nazarbayev brought our nation into a new era. Thanks to the considerable

efforts of many, Kazakhstan has developed into the leading economy of the region with a high profile on the global stage.

As well as for Japan, 2019 is a historical time for Kazakhstan. This year my country experienced an unprecedented political event in the period of its independence — the announcement of former President Nazarbayev's voluntary decision to resign and transfer power to a new generation of leaders. His decision was a major moment for a country that had known no other leader since independence, a turning point that outside observers had warned was a potential threat to Kazakhstan's hard-won stability and progress.

The subsequent presidential elections and the convincing victory of the new Presi-

dent Kassym-Jomart Tokayev demonstrated the stability of our political system and continued commitment to building a prosperous and democratic society.

Tokayev is building on the first president's legacy. The first state-of-the-nation address on Sept. 2 from Tokayev underlined how Kazakhstan is confidently beginning the next stage of its development. Regarding the economy, public services, quality of life and political reform, there were ambitious plans to drive the country forward.

Kazakhstan saw a 4.3 percent gross domestic product growth from January to September.

International rankings show the improvement of the business environment. The country moved up three spots to 25th on the World Bank Doing Business 2020 report due to improvements in issuing permits, ease of getting a loan and starting a business. Such position in the doing business rating was made possible thanks to the ongoing systematic work of the government to reform existing legislation, improve the licensing system, simplify business creation procedures and optimize state control.

According to the World Economic Forum, Kazakhstan ranked 55th out of 141 countries in the Global Competitiveness Index. The country ranked 67th in infrastructure and 44th in information and communica-

tions technology adoption.

I would like to underline the role of the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) to create a favorable business climate. The AIFC formed its own legislation by adopting close to 70 general application rules and financial regulation. The total registered enterprises of the AIFC regulator grew to 235 companies from 26 countries. This includes financial institutions such as the China Development Bank, China Construction Bank, as well as Wood & Co. from the Czech Republic and CICC in Hong Kong. The Astana International Exchange (AIX) raised over \$70 million worth of equity capital in less than a year after its launch in November 2018.

The total capital of the AIX was roughly \$2 billion. As part of digitization, eJustice, an online dispute resolution system unique to the region, was launched at the beginning of the year. This allowed different parties to electronically file an action with the AIFC Court from different parts of the world.

In 2019 Kazakhstan and Japan continued to develop the bilateral relations of their strategic partnership. In October Nazarbayev represented Kazakhstan at the enthronement ceremony of Emperor Naruhito. The participation of Nazarbayev, who was at the forefront of bilateral cooperation, in this event testifies to the intention

of Kazakhstan to further deepen friendly relations with Japan in all spheres. In Tokyo, Nazarbayev met Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to discuss the priority areas of bilateral cooperation, including interaction in the commercial and economic, political and cultural spheres.

Kazakhstan and Japan also aim for a nuclear-weapons-free-world. On Sept. 19 the Kazakhstan-Japan: Path to a Nuclear-Weapons-Free World conference was held at the United Nations University in Tokyo. Kazakh nuclear disarmament activist and ATOM Project Honorary Ambassador Karipbek Kuykov presented his paintings depicting the horrors of nuclear weapons testing and the use of nuclear weapons.

The two countries maintain positive dynamics of trade and economic cooperation — bilateral trade turnover for 2018 reached \$2 billion.

For expansion of people-to-people exchanges to further develop economic and business relations, SCAT Airlines launched a direct flight between Nur-Sultan and Tokyo on July 6, Capital Day in Kazakhstan.

Our nation sits at a global crossroads in the heart of Eurasia. We are a dynamic hub between Russia, China, the Middle East and Europe, as well as the center of historic, current and future trade routes. Considering this advantage, on Aug. 13 Nippon Express



First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on Oct. 23. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

established a representative office in the city of Almaty in Kazakhstan. President of Nippon Express Mitsuru Saito believes the representative office will serve as a bridge between East Asia and Europe and aims to contribute to Kazakhstan's development mainly through logistics.

In conclusion, I would like to note that every year we mark our independence with a day of celebration, a milestone to remember how far our nation has come and

acknowledge our future direction. In 2019, friendship and trust between countries both near and far are as important as they have ever been. On Dec. 16, we give thanks for 28 years of an independent Kazakhstan with our friends around 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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to the People of
the Republic of Kazakhstan
on the Anniversary of
Their Independence

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