

# Ethiopia National Day Special

## National goals support continuing growth

**KASSA TEKLEBRHAN GEBREHIWET**  
AMBASSADOR OF ETHIOPIA



On behalf of the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the people and myself, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation for the devotion of the government of

Japan in managing COVID-19 domestically and its continual friendly cooperation on a global scale. Last month, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe spoke over the phone to coordinate efforts to curb the spread of the pandemic. We offer our thoughts, sincere prayers and good wishes during this very challenging time. We feel solidarity and sympathy for those who have lost their loved ones and those hit hardest by the virus.

Ethiopia and Japan have established relations that began with the ties between the royal and imperial families during the Showa Era (1926 to 1989). Ethiopian intellectuals, famously called Japanizers, popularized Japan to the Ethiopian public with their writings and public debates in favor of following the footsteps of Japan's rapid economic development. The victory of marathoner Abebe Bikila, an Ethiopian gold medalist at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, further augmented our people-to-people rela-

tions. The forthcoming Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games offer another outstanding opportunity to bring our people much closer.

The first anniversary of Emperor Naruhito's enthronement nearly coincides with the second anniversary of our prime minister coming to power. The prime minister is well-known for his national reforms and regional initiatives that steered Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa toward peace and cooperation. In recognition of his efforts, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. He also actively engaged in The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development last year.

There have been several political and economic reforms in Ethiopia over the past two years. Ethiopia's political reform has widened the political space, favoring greater press freedom and an elevated respect for human rights.

In the economic sphere, the government partially privatized public enterprises. Tangentially, a new economic reform blueprint, dubbed the Homegrown Economic Reform, has been unveiled. It particularly emphasizes agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism, communication and information technology.

Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's premier airline, offers flights to more than 60 African destinations and nearly 50 outside of Africa, including Japan at five flights a week. In this challenging time, the airline is currently repatriating Japanese nationals from across Africa.

With a workforce comprising 60 percent of the population, a young and easily trainable populace and favorable government policies, Ethiopia is the second-most populous and most significant market in Africa. Each year, 70 percent of university graduates earn their degrees in the fields of science and engineering. Ethiopia's products also enjoy duty and quota-free access to a vast market spanning Africa, the U.S. and the European Union.

Ethiopia is among the fastest-growing economies, with an annual gross domestic product growth of 11 percent on average for the last 16 years. It is also one of the largest foreign direct investment recipients in Africa.

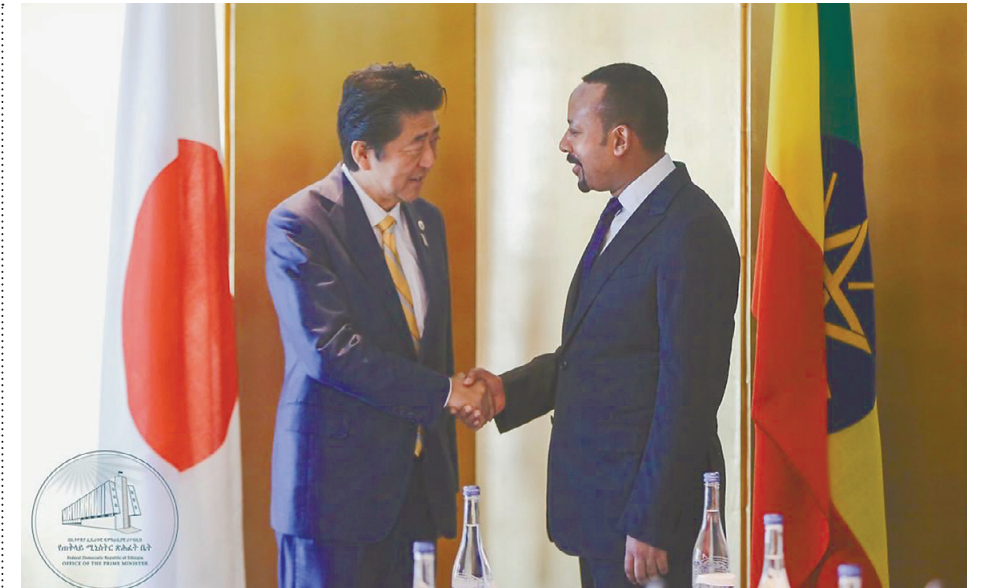
Ethiopia is developing industrial parks with one-stop services and a full range of infrastructure for investors. In terms of GDP, its infrastructure spending ranks the highest in Africa. Ethiopia also fully embraces the *kaizen* (continuous improvement) methodology.

To address the shortage and provide energy — vital for industrial development — Ethiopia is constructing the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile River. The dam is a flagship project financed solely by the Ethiopian people. Whereas 86 percent of the Nile's waters originate in Ethiopia, a river that could potentially supply two-thirds of Ethiopia with hydroelectric power, more than 65 million are without access to electricity and the demand for energy is increasing by 32 percent each year. Ethiopians are, therefore, looking forward to the

completion of the GERD, which is capable of generating 6,000 megawatts of electricity.

Despite the enormous investment and trade opportunities, Japanese businesses participation in Ethiopia remains minimal. I would, therefore, like to invite Japanese companies to invest and do business in Ethiopia. I assure you that we are fully committed to strengthen further the current Ethiopia-Japan relations through a dynamic and robust private sector engagement and to assist the Japanese business community in its activities.

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



**Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe shake hands during their meeting in Yokohama on August 29.** PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE OF ETHIOPIA



**Ethiopian Airlines planes at Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa in April. The airline's chartered flights began repatriating Japanese residents in African nations to Japan in April.** REUTERS / TIKSA NEGERI

**Congratulations**  
to the People of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
on the Anniversary of Their National Day



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