

Excellent ties spur achievements

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AMBASSADOR OF THE MALDIVES



On July 26, the Maldives celebrates its 55th anniversary of independence, and on this auspicious occasion, I wish to convey my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations. Celebrating this day with our friends in Japan

would have been ideal, but during this unprecedented global health crisis, our efforts are geared toward overcoming this adversity. I wish to convey our deepest sympathies to all those affected by this and other disasters, and pray for the safety of those who work on the front lines.

The Maldives is vulnerable to environmental disasters, but a serious casualty of the present health crisis is our economy. The disruptions to global travel led to a temporary halt to issuance of tourist visas to the Maldives, but, from July 15, the Maldives' tourism industry has reopened and, as before, all tourists are issued a 30-day free on-arrival visa. The safety measures taken by our government and the natural geographic separation and low-density accommodations of the Maldives' islands provide a safe option for a holiday in relaxed isolation. The government's decision for a phased reopening of the industry is good news to travelers wishing to visit the Maldives.

Being environmentally vulnerable means that the Maldives cannot sacrifice our natural ecosystems for short-term gains.

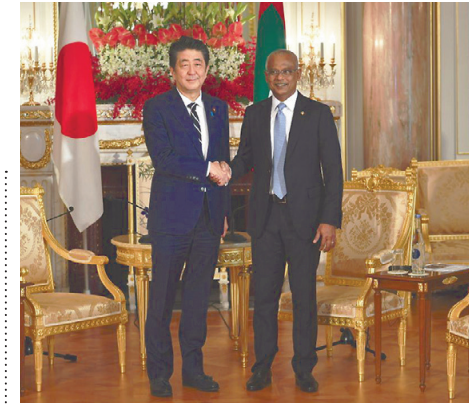
As such, our administration's "blue economy" expresses a renewed commitment to sustainable development. Since President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih assumed office in 2018, the Maldives has prioritized human rights issues, implemented institutional reforms for good governance and is re-engaging with our international partners. In February, the Maldives rejoined the Commonwealth of Nations after a four-year absence and will continue to partner with our global friends with a renewed spirit toward resolving our common challenges. The Maldives is committed to building on the accomplishments since its independence — from being one of the poorest countries to a middle-income country.

These achievements would not have been possible if not for the collaboration and support from our development partners. In this regard, Japan has made important contributions to a sustainable Maldives since independence. Japan's assistance to the Maldives is far reaching through the Maldivian archipelago. From helping build schools to the seawall that protects the capital Malé, Japan has provided assistance in times of need. Numerous Maldivians have benefited from the Japan International Cooperation Agency's training programs and exchanges with members of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program.

This year marks the 53rd year since Japan and the Maldives established diplomatic relations. The bilateral relationship is built on strong foundations of people-to-people contact and an ever-broadening dialogue for cooperation. On behalf of the government and the people of the Maldives, I express my sincere appreciation to the government and people of Japan for the

invaluable support and cooperation extended throughout these years. We are confident that our close friendship will continue to strengthen and further diversify in the years ahead. We remain keen on furthering our shared commitment to peace, security and prosperity.

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



President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih meets with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on Oct. 21.
THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Congratulations on the Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Maldives



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