

Indonesia Independence Day Special

Joint cooperation critical in restoring economies in post-virus world

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On Aug. 17, Indonesians around the world celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia. More than seven decades have passed since our founding

fathers reminded us that the struggle carried out earnestly will bear fruit and independence does not mean the end of a struggle.

These messages of independence from our founding fathers share a great resemblance to our situation today, where the world is in the midst of battling against the common threat of the coronavirus pandemic.

A threat that can only be addressed through collective efforts from around the world, which requires perseverance from all stakeholders, and entails the world to strengthen cooperation and collaboration despite existing differences.

With the world coming to a halt due to lockdowns, travel restrictions and efforts to curb the further spread of the coronavirus, Indonesia is also faced with the challenge of ensuring adequate health measures across more than 17,000 islands, from Sabang to Merauke, a distance that roughly equals that of London to Tehran.

The global economic downturn exacerbated by the limited capability of governments to provide sufficient health assistance has made global collaboration, multilateralism and collective efforts to develop medicines and vaccines for the coronavirus more relevant than ever.

In complementing this global fight, it is worth noting that Indonesia and Japan have been working hand in hand to curb

and tackle the coronavirus. Various support and assistance through government-to-government and business-to-business efforts and via international organizations, as well as repatriations of nationals from both countries, have been conducted between Japan and Indonesia to address this unprecedented global threat.

Partnership in addressing the coronavirus not only brings Indonesia and Japan closer, but is very much aligned with the goals of President Joko Widodo in his second term, namely infrastructure development, human resource development, job generation and empowerment of small and mid-sized enterprises.

Infrastructure projects encompassing the development of mass rapid transit train, seaports, highways and the development of Indonesia's outer islands are being conducted with assistance from Japan.

Recruitment of highly skilled, semi-skilled and trainees from Indonesia have generated an added value to the human resource development aspect.

In addition, Indonesia welcomes more Japanese companies to capitalize on various industrial complexes, infrastructural development and other incentives as part of our policy to support and strengthen the supply chain and diversify production.

Indonesian goods are also getting more and more attractive in Japanese markets and include biomass, fish products, cocoa, footwear, clothing and automotive spare parts, among others.

Japan remains as Indonesia's strategic partner in trade and investment, being the second-largest investor in Indonesia cumulatively from 2014 to 2019, with around \$25.2 billion in investment.

Apart from the economic aspect, strong collaboration in various multilateral and regional forums have been the highlight of the Indonesia-Japan relationship.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Toshimitsu Motegi meets with his Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi during the Japan-Indonesia Ministerial Level Strategic Dialogue in Jakarta on Jan. 10. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA

Group of 20, Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation are among the platforms where the two nations are collaborating to establish a peaceful, prosperous and stable region.

Yet another essential aspect to the strong bilateral relations between Indonesia and Japan is the people-to-people contact.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1958, the two countries have enjoyed cordial exchanges between our people, ranging from heads of state and government, high-ranking officials, academia and other experts and business officials to individuals.

These exchanges are the foundation of a strong bilateral relationship. Therefore, it is imperative that a closely monitored and reciprocal travel corridor between Indonesia and Japan remains.

The easing of travel restrictions would not only be mutually beneficial for both

countries, but would also facilitate the necessary collaboration and partnership to overcome the various challenges due to the pandemic.

With the imminent threat of the coronavirus and the need to establish a more efficient environment for businesses to thrive, we must strike a balance in addressing these issues.

While closely moving economic activities to the "new normal," Indonesia and Japan must remain steadfast in tackling the coronavirus. Strengthening collaboration and cooperation is a sine qua non in this challenging time and for the bilateral relationship to be fortified. We are confident that our strong ties will undoubtedly provide a great impetus in tackling current global challenges.

Ganbatte! (Let's do our best!)

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



Clockwise from top left: METI Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama, coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Pandjaitan, Tri Purnajaya and Minister of Industry Agus Gumilang hold a virtual consultation on July 14. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA



Bali is an Indonesian island that adheres to the Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Protocol, known for its forested volcanic mountains, iconic rice paddies, beaches and coral reefs. The island is home to Kecak, a type of Balinese Hindu dance and music drama that developed in the 1930s. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA



Komodo Island, a holiday destination with Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Protocol. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA



Banyuwangi is a popular holiday destination famous for holding traditional festivals. It was declared a national geological park in 2018. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA

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