

Uzbekistan Independence Day Special

New era unfolding in bilateral relationship

GAYRAT FAZILOV
AMBASSADOR OF UZBEKISTAN



The past year has marked the beginning of a new stage in bilateral relations between Uzbekistan and Japan.

From Dec. 17 to 20, 2019, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, His

Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid an official visit to Japan for the first time. During his visit, the president held meetings with His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, as well as with the heads of both chambers of the Diet and major Japanese companies.

It is deeply symbolic that the visit of the president of Uzbekistan to Japan took place in the first year of the Reiwa Era. The bilateral summit allowed us to bring relations to a higher level, to open a new page of bilateral cooperation between Uzbekistan and Japan — relations that are one of the priorities of

foreign policy of our country.

After his election in December 2016, Mirziyoyev began cardinal and deep reforms of domestic and foreign politics, as well as in the economic sphere. A new democratic image of Uzbekistan is being created as a result of this modernization of the country, ensuring human rights, freedoms and the rule of law.

In 2019, Uzbekistan's gross domestic product grew by 5.5 percent. At the same time, industry grew by 6.4 percent, construction by 11.8 percent and the service sector by 6.1 percent. GDP per capita increased by 13.6 percent to \$1,741.

During the first quarter of 2020 GDP grew by 4.1 percent. Despite the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy, Uzbekistan is the only country in the Commonwealth of Independent States that is forecast to grow by 1.5 percent in 2020.

As a result of ongoing reforms, Uzbekistan's investment attractiveness significantly increased, which prompted large and leading foreign companies to more actively enter the Uzbek market. In 2019 the volume of foreign direct investment amounted to \$4.2

billion, which is \$3.1 billion (3.7 times) more than in 2018. The share of investment in GDP has reached 37 percent.

Uzbekistan has huge tourism potential and a rich cultural and historical heritage with 7,400 objects of cultural heritage. Two hundred-nine of these are included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. With Uzbekistan being one of the key points of the Great Silk Road, cities such as Samarkand, Tashkent, Bukhara and Khiva attract a large number of foreign tourists.

The government of Uzbekistan has introduced a visa-free regime for citizens of 86 countries and an e-visa regime for citizens of 57 countries. Due to this, in 2019 6.7 million foreign tourists visited Uzbekistan. This is 4.7 million or 3.3 times more visitors than in 2016.

Over the past three years, Uzbekistan has significantly intensified its foreign policy. Under the leadership of Mirziyoyev, a course is being conducted to increase cooperation with all interested countries.

In this process, Uzbekistan pays special attention to the enlargement and deepening of all-round cooperation with Japan,

our long-standing and time-tested strategic partner.

During the past period, we were able to enhance close cooperation in the political, financial and economic, technological, cultural and humanitarian, and tourism areas. Regular exchange of visits at governmental and parliamentary levels, a growing interest in establishing the further cooperation of business groups, a richness in cultural-humanitarian cooperation, the increasing activeness in organization and holding various joint events present a modern and dynamic development of Uzbek-Japanese relations.

We are looking for further expansion of our close and fruitful collaboration with Japan in various fields and hope that Japan will continue to and hopefully play a more active role in development and modernization of the Uzbek economy. I am sure that the bedrock of historic and cultural ties between our countries, along with the enormous potential for economic and political cooperation, will continue to serve for the further enhancement of the Uzbek-Japanese strategic partnership.

Strategic partnership benefiting all

TARO ASO
CHAIRMAN OF THE JAPAN-UZBEKISTAN
PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE OF FRIENDSHIP



I would like to express my heartfelt felicitations to the leadership and people of Uzbekistan on the occasion of the 29th Anniversary of Independence.

Our countries maintain traditionally close relations with deep historical ties that date back to the time of the Great Silk Road. Uzbekistan was the center of the Great Silk Road and cradle of ancient civilization.

Uzbekistan is a key strategic partner of Japan in Central Asia. Under the strong leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, a wide range of economic, social and democratic reforms are being implemented in the country.

Japan-Uzbek relations have been developing in the spirit of the 2002 Joint Statement on Friendship, Strategic Partnership and Cooperation, as well as the

2019 joint statement on further deepening and expanding the strategic partnership between Japan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The official visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Uzbekistan in October 2015 and the recent visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Japan in December 2019 were the most important events in the history of Japan-Uzbek relations and gave stimulus to the further development of our relations in the fields of politics, economy, finance, investment, tourism, technology and science.

On the occasion of the 29th anniversary of independence, I express sincere belief in the further development of the cooperation between Japan and Uzbekistan and the further expansion of the ties of friendship between our people.

Finally, I wish the people and leadership of Uzbekistan peace, health, prosperity and further development of friendly and warm relations between our nations.

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



President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and his wife met with Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako on Dec. 20 in Tokyo. EMBASSY OF UZBEKISTAN

Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Uzbekistan
on the Occasion of
the Anniversary of
Their Independence

Marubeni

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