

Vietnam National Day Special

75 years of growth sees varied record achievements

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AMBASSADOR OF VIETNAM



The year 2020 sees the Socialist Republic of Vietnam enter its 75th year. The past 75 years was a long chapter penned by the people of Vietnam, full of toil and hardship, yet equally full of glory, defending our independence, forging our reunification and building our country. Those 75 years saw the Vietnamese people making tireless efforts to fulfill the goal set by our beloved leader, President Ho Chi Minh, in the Declaration of Independence on Sept. 2, 1945 — freedom, equality and happiness to the entire Vietnamese people.

Through reclaiming independence, defending national territorial integrity and rebuilding Vietnam as a country arising from the ashes of war, those 75 years are an epic ode to the heroism of the Vietnamese people. From very early days, Vietnam's independence was already under threat from foreign invasion. Following a protracted war of resistance lasting nine years, half of the country was liberated in 1954. It was not until 20 years later that the independence of Vietnam was truly secured through the renowned victory of 1975.

Through our spirit of self-reliance, independence and resilience, the people of Vietnam made every effort to rise above and beyond from a nation ravaged by war and under suffocating sanctions. The Doi Moi (reform) was successfully undertaken, making Vietnam one of the most dynamic and attractive economies in Asia, as well as an enabling economic hub in the international supply and value chains.

The year 2019 saw Vietnam attaining record achievements across the board. Economic growth exceeded 7 percent, foreign direct investment attraction was above \$38 billion, foreign trade turnover was \$517 billion, among which Vietnam enjoyed a trade surplus of \$9.9 billion. More than 18 million foreign visitors came to Vietnam throughout the year. Vietnam's economy has become deeply

integrated into the world and it has become a vital link in the global supply chain, providing key products such as smartphones; electronics; textiles; footwear; agricultural products including rice, coffee, pepper, cashew nuts; and seafood such as shrimp and fish exported to all corners of the world. In addition to such successes Vietnam is also known as an attractive and reliable investment destination. As of today, total FDI into Vietnam is worth \$380.6 billion.

While affected by the coronavirus this year, Vietnam's economy is still recording promising gains. According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook Update issued in June, Vietnam is one of the few countries in the world enjoying positive economic growth in 2020, projected to be 2.7 percent, also the highest growth rate in Asia.

2020 is also the year that records Vietnam's ongoing successful fulfillment of its dual responsibility as ASEAN chair and second tenure as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council for 2020 and 2021.

The coronavirus pandemic is causing great suffering around the globe. Nevertheless, Vietnam was successful in keeping it under control during the first three months. This is thanks to the decisiveness and unity of the Vietnamese people and government in applying cohesive measures across the nation.

In the last 75 years, the Vietnam-Japan relationship has undergone both highs and lows. Yet as a whole, our friendship and cooperation have constantly grown. Diplomatic relations were established in 1973, before the war in Vietnam ended. The country is always appreciative that Japan recognized the unified Vietnamese government while the war was still afoot. We are also grateful to the Japanese people for various movements and protests against the war in Vietnam. Such support played a remarkable role in the 1975 victory.

This year, Vietnam-Japan diplomatic relations enter its 47th year. The two countries have become the most trusted partners in developing an exemplary relationship rested on mutual understanding, equal cooperation and shared interest. The Vietnam-Japan Extensive Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity,



Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Future of Asia Conference. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF VIETNAM

established in 2014, is a solid foundation upon which our two countries shall continue building a stronger bond in response to rapid changes in the global and regional landscape and within each country.

The regular exchange of delegations, especially high-level visits, plays a vital role in promoting mutual understanding and trust, elevating our bilateral relations to its height today. Leaders of each country have always enjoyed cordial relations. A key highlight was the 2017 visit to Vietnam by Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, a true historical milestone in the history of our bilateral relations.

In spite of the pandemic and its adversities, exchanges among leaders and province-to-province cooperation go unhindered through using various formats, such as telephone calls and virtual conferences.

All of this has helped further strengthen the political trust and good friendship between both sides, relations through which difficulties and challenges shall surely be overcome, the impact of the pandemic mitigated, normal economic production resumed and economic development strengthened.

During a telephone call on Aug. 4, 2020, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said to his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Xuan

Phuc, and I quote, "... a friend in need is a friend indeed." In the fight against the coronavirus, both governments and people have been giving each other support, sympathy and material assistance such as face masks and medical equipment.

Such kind gestures have helped enhance our respective capacity in combating the pandemic, contributing to common regional efforts. The two countries are also actively engaged in discussion to loosen travel restrictions to resume commercial flights as soon as the situation allows.

For over 50 years since first opening its market to foreign investment, Vietnam has become a trusted destination for foreign investors, including those from Japan. Japan is now Vietnam's top official development assistance donor, second-largest investor, fourth-largest trade partner and the country with the third-largest number of tourists visiting Vietnam. As we speak, Japan has 4,568 investment projects in 56 out of the 63 provinces and



Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc at the enthronement ceremony of Emperor Naruhito. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF VIETNAM

municipalities of Vietnam, worth \$60.2 billion in sum.

Though affected by the coronavirus, bilateral trade turnover in the first six months this year grew by 1.4 percent to more than \$18.7 billion. Through the tireless efforts of competent authorities and businesses from both countries and after five years of negotiation, June 2020 saw the first batch of Vietnamese lychees meeting the stringent standards of the Japanese market being made available on supermarket shelves in Japan.

Labor cooperation is also a highlight of bilateral relations. The Vietnamese community in Japan is now more than 400,000 — the third-largest community of foreign nationals in Japan.

Albeit engineers, interns, workers on the factory floors or construction sites, or visiting students across all Japanese prefectures, the Vietnamese community in Japan is not only a positive presence contributing to the economy of Japan; they are friendship ambassadors cultivating

the mutual understanding and affection between our people.

On the occasion of this most ceremonial festivity and the Vietnamese people celebrating Vietnam's 75th year, allow me to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the imperial family, government and people of Japan, and to all Japanese friends, for the immense and invaluable assistance you have given to Vietnam throughout the years.

I am also confident that the friendship between Vietnam and world partners, as well as the Extensive Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in Asia between Vietnam and Japan shall continue to grow strongly.

To all friends and readers of The Japan Times, I wish you all good health and great success.

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



Green Tea Island, Nghe An Province, a popular destination during the Lunar New Year Holiday. VIETNAM'S MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM



The Sea Cliff of Stone Plates, a seashore of interlocking basalt rocks in Phu Yen Province. VIETNAM'S MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM

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 of Their National Day

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