

Myanmar National Day Special

Aim to strengthen ties to a sustainable level

U SOE HAN
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
UNION OF MYANMAR



On this auspicious occasion of the 73rd anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to extend, on behalf of the government and the people of Myanmar,

our heartfelt appreciation and warm greetings to their majesties the emperor and the empress, and the government and the people of Japan, for their consistent support in strengthening the historic and long-lasting friendship between Myanmar and Japan to that of a sustainable partnership.

Myanmar and Japan have cherished and enjoyed cordial relations and mutually beneficial cooperation since the establishment of diplomatic relations in November 1954. One of the unique features of Myanmar-Japan relations is heart-to-heart, people-to-people relations based on cultural affinity and understanding. The frequent exchange of high-level visits between the leaders of both countries is just one example.

At the invitation of the government of Japan, Her Excellency State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited Japan in October 2019 to attend the enthronement ceremony

of His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito. During the visit, she discussed with then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe the promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation between Myanmar and Japan, as well as the fostering of economic cooperation between the two countries, including the Thilawa Special Economic Zone and Japan's continued support of the Myanmar government's efforts to achieve peace and national reconciliation in the country.

His Excellency Toshimitsu Motegi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, visited Myanmar in August 2020. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Motegi and discussed further strengthening of cooperation in combating the coronavirus pandemic. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed the Myanmar government's appreciation to the government and people of Japan for the technical and financial assistance provided to Myanmar.

The Myanmar government has been exerting its utmost efforts in protecting public health and mitigating the economic impact by implementing its COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan by stimulating the economy and boosting spending on health and social safety nets. The government is now developing the new Myanmar Economic Recovery and Reform Plan, which, together with other initiatives, will further strengthen Myanmar's investment-enabling environment over the coming years.

The Myanmar Investment Commission

approved \$5.5 billion in foreign investment from the fiscal year ended in September 2020, an increase of 33% compared with the same period of the previous year. Japan is the fifth-largest investor in Myanmar and the third-largest export market. Approved foreign direct investment from Japan in this fiscal year exceeds \$700 million. The bilateral trade between the two countries exceeded \$1.273 billion in this fiscal year.

I am pleased to share that, during the Myanmar-Japan Investment Forum held virtually in July 2020, the Myanmar government announced two new infrastructure projects. These are the establishment of a new special economic zone in the south-eastern part of the country and the launch of a new industrial park in the western part of Yangon. Because it is situated in a geo-strategic location in the region, Myanmar has ample room for economic growth and, as such, we hope Japan's public and private sectors will continue to invest in Myanmar.

Japan is also offering a helping hand to Myanmar in our democratic transition. In November, a multiparty general election was held in Myanmar. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga sent a congratulatory message to State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for the success of the National League for Democracy in winning the election. Suga stated in his congratulatory message that Japan will continue to fully support the democratic nation-building of Myanmar.

Myanmar highly values its relations and

cooperation with Japan that offer mutual benefit to both peoples. Therefore, as an ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Japan, I promise to work together with both the public and private sectors of Japan to promote cooperation between our two countries. I would also like to express my firm commitment to further strengthen the existing friendship to a sustainable partnership for the benefit of our countries and peoples.

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



View of Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon, at dusk GETTY IMAGES

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the Republic of
the Union of Myanmar
on the Anniversary of
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Congratulations

**to the People of the Republic of the Union of
Myanmar on the Anniversary of Their Independence**

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