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JAPAN-PHILIPPINES FRIENDSHIP DAY

A FRIENDSHIP WOVEN IN TRUST

COMMEMORATING 69 YEARS OF JAPAN-PHILIPPINES TIES

By Kazuya Endo
*Japanese Ambassador
to the Philippines*

Isang mainit na pagbati sa lahat ng aking mga kaibigang Pilipino (Warm greetings to all my Filipino friends)! It is my great pleasure and honor to celebrate with you today the 69th Japan-Philippines Friendship Day.

As we commemorate this special occasion, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the ongoing Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and, in particular the Philippine Pavilion. I had the privilege of visiting the Philippine Pavilion twice — first, during the Philippine National Day and again during the visit of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and First Lady Louise Arana-Marcos. On both occasions, I was deeply impressed by the thoughtful presentation of the Pavilion and particularly its symbolic theme — “Woven.” When I heard and experienced this theme, I found myself thinking: this theme is a perfect metaphor for the entirety of Japan-Philippines relations.

The ties that bind our two nations are like a tapestry woven from various threads of trust. And those threads — be it people-to-people and cultural ties, or economic and security partnerships — are woven together to create a vivid, rich, and beautiful tapestry called Japan-Philippines relations. Using this metaphor, let me illustrate some of the threads we’ve woven together lately that add a new color and design to our partnership.

Thread of Fostering Enduring People-to-People and Cultural Connections

As our cooperation grows from strength to strength, robust people-to-people and cultural ties continue to play a role in the foundational thread of our trust. In my various visits across the Philippines’ vast regions, I’ve been truly overwhelmed by the local support for our bilateral partnership. It has been particularly heartwarming to witness our Filipino friends’ deep interest in and shared love for Japanese culture, clearly demonstrated by the record-high of over 820,000 Filipino visitors to Japan last year. With the recent opening of the Japan Visa Application Center (JVAC), we are optimistic about sustaining this encouraging trend in the years ahead.

With tourism a promising source of shared experiences, our ties continue to find renewal through the personal encounters Filipinos have with Japanese culture. In our lively receptions at the Ambassador’s Residence, I’ve had the privilege of hearing about the lasting friendships and experiences forged by Filipino participants in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme and recipients of the Japanese Government Scholarship (MEXT). Meanwhile, the aspirations of our Filipino JDS (Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship) Fellows and SSEAYP (Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program) delegates have also been a glowing testament to deepening people-to-people exchanges with the Philippines.

Furthermore, my wife and I are delightedly grateful to have participated in many events celebrating our two countries’ cultures here in the Philippines. Rooting for our Japanese volleyball teams togeth-

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A FRIENDSHIP WOVEN IN TRUST: COMMEMORATING 69 YEARS OF JAPAN-PHILIPPINES TIES



Defense Minister NAKATANI Gen and Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. at the Japan-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting



Foreign Minister Takeshi IWAYA and Secretary Enrique Manalo at the Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting © MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS JAPAN

Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting: (L) Japanese Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru (R) Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

© CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



FROM B2-1 er with Filipino fans, sharing the art of Nihon Buyo or traditional dance on the occasion of Japan's National Day Celebration, interacting with young Filipino university students, appreciating beautiful Ikebana arrangements, and singing along to the Filipino-Japanese jazz band who performed at my humble residence are among my fondest memories with our Filipino friends thus far.

Vibrant visits of dignitaries are always a reflection of the importance of our bilateral relations. In the time of growing volatility and complexity, neighboring countries that share fundamental values and strategic interests are ever more important. During the first half of the year, the Philippines welcomed a series of visits from Japanese Cabinet Ministers who were generously greeted with the iconic brand of Philippine hospitality. In January, we warmly received Foreign Minister IWAYA Takeshi, followed by Defense Minister NAKATANI Gen in February. Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism NAKANO Hiromasa also made his visit in April. These visits culminated in the first official visit of Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru to the Philippines in April — marking the second visit by a Japanese prime minister under the Marcos administration.

Thread of Bolstering Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

Economic partnership is another important thread I would like to highlight. Japan has been consistently supporting sustainable development in the Philippines. The past year has seen a significant bolstering of our economic cooperation, with Japan contributing to quality infrastructure projects in the country. These include the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMS), the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), and the Davao City Bypass Construction Project — all funded by Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Apart from these



Opening of the Japan Visa Application Center in Paranaque City (JVAC)



Ambassador ENDO Kazuya attends Cebu Pacific Air's Inauguration Ceremony of the Manila-Chito Route



Madame ENDO Akiko attends Japan Film Festival 2025 by the Japan Foundation Manila



Embassy of Japan in the Philippines joins the 2024 International Bazaar at the World Trade Center in Pasay City



Hello!Japan provides educational courses on Japanese culture to schools and private organizations



Japanese traditional dance performance or "Nihon Buyo" at Japan's National Day Celebration



Ambassador Endo poses with well-loved Filipino fast-food chain, Jollibee mascot



Special Hello!Japan session in Bicol with Japanese artist FuMi



Special Japan Cultural Night: Jazz Concert at the Ambassador's Residence



Turnover ceremony of volleyball supplies from the Japan Volleyball Association (JVA) to the Philippine National Volleyball Federation (PNVF)



Nihongo Fiesta 2025 at the Red Carpet Cinema, Shangri-La Plaza, Mandaluyong City



Ambassador & Madame Endo visit Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku



Ambassador ENDO Kazuya and Madame ENDO Akiko watch volleyball invitationals between Philippine National Teams Alas Pilipinas and Japanese powerhouses SAGA Hisamitsu Springs and Osaka Bluteon

A FRIENDSHIP WOVEN IN TRUST: COMMEMORATING 69 YEARS OF JAPAN-PHILIPPINES TIES

FROM B2-2 projects, this year, we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of JICA's Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), which has been providing grassroots support for the development of various countries, including the Philippines.

The strong economic ties between Japan and the Philippines are the cornerstone of our friendship. Japan remains as one of the top investors in the Philippines, especially in Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) locations. With cumulative investments exceeding P150 billion and direct employment of over 300,000 Filipinos, these significantly impact our economies. Following the relaxation of foreign ownership rules in retail, we've recently welcomed several

prominent Japanese brands. Nitori opened its first store in 2024, shortly after I assumed my post last year. In addition, Mitsuokoshi BGC opened in mid-2023. These are landmarks in the growing Japanese retail presence in our market.

Japan also continues to extend its steadfast support for the peace process in the Bangsamoro region, through the three pillars of the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development (J-BIRD). These efforts encompass capacity-building for the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), assistance in the transformation of former combatant communities into progressive and resilient societies, and the provision of socio-economic development assistance. As we look forward

to the first Bangsamoro Parliament elections, we recognize this milestone as a significant stride towards achieving lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

Thread of Deepening Security Partnerships

The security cooperation thread is growing evidence of our deepening trust, driven by our shared commitment to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). This concept, promoting peace, stability, and prosperity across the region through ensuring rules-based international order, has certainly been realized by our bilateral cooperation. The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) signed in July 2024, for instance, has emerged as a landmark achievement for our two

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President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. & First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos visit the Philippine Pavilion at the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan

«PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE



Ambassador ENDO Kazuya pays a courtesy call on Department of Tourism - Philippines (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia-Frasco with MYAKU-MYAKU, the official mascot of the Osaka-Kansai Expo



Ambassador ENDO Kazuya congratulates two-time Olympic gold medalist gymnast Carlos Yulo



Ambassador ENDO Kazuya meets with the Filipino Nikkei-jin community in Baguio & Davao



Japan Travel Fair 2025 organized by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) at the Glorietta Activity Center «JNTO PHILIPPINES



Ambassador ENDO Kazuya meets with the 48th batch of Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program (SSEAYP) delegates



JICA Volunteer YAMAMOTO poses with his counterparts from disaster risk reduction office in La Trinidad «JICA PHILIPPINES



JICA expert with agricultural worker and farmer beneficiary from BARM «JICA PHILIPPINES



A JICA trainee from Mindanao sharing her agriculture knowledge to women farmers' association under JICA's CDPB «JICA PHILIPPINES



Japan pavilion at Travel Madness Expo 2025 «JNTO PHILIPPINES



JICA Volunteer NA-KAZAWA is assigned in Iloilo to share math education techniques «JICA PHILIPPINES



JNTO desk at Bon Odori Festival 2025 in Cebu «JNTO PHILIPPINES



Japan pavilion at Travel Madness Expo 2025 «JNTO PHILIPPINES



Ambassador ENDO Kazuya hosts the send-off reception for Filipino MEXT (Japanese Government) scholars



Senju Buidan performs at SM Aura, Taguig



Japanese traditional dance group Senju Buidan conducts workshops at Philippine universities



Send off ceremony for the 22nd batch of the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship by Japanese Grant Aid (JDS) fellows from the Philippines



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Ambassador ENDO Kazuya and Madame ENDO Akiko attend the opening reception of the TOKYO Before/After, a traveling photography exhibition



Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Programme Fellowship Reception at the Ambassador's Residence

A FRIENDSHIP WOVEN IN TRUST: COMMEMORATING 69 YEARS OF JAPAN-PHILIPPINES TIES

FROM B2-4 countries. Its unanimous approval by the Philippine Senate in December of the same year and its approval by the Japanese Diet last June underscore our shared commitment to regional peace and stability. In the recently held Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting, our two leaders further agreed to commence negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The meeting also confirmed the importance of an early conclusion of an Agreement on the Security of Information.

On another promising front, Japan's unwavering support for the Philippines' security capabilities remains well represented through our Official Security Assistance (OSA) scheme. At present, the Philippines holds the distinction of being the first recipient of the OSA, as well as the only country to have been granted OSA funding for two consecutive years. Japan is further conducting a feasibility study for the OSA for the third year. We have also witnessed the frequent conduct of Maritime Cooperative Activities (MCA) and increased port visits by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels in the country. This year, in fact, we had the honor of hosting the 71st Anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces aboard the JMSDF vessel, JS ISE, during its visit at the Port of Manila.

The threads of our bilateral friendship are interwoven with a strong commitment to international peace and security, a tapestry we continue to weave together through active multilateral engagement. This shared dedication is evident in our cooperation on disarmament. Japan's participation in the High-Level Launch Meeting of the Friends of the Fissile Ma-

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



North-South Commuter Railway Project (Malolos-Tutuban) Viaduct Span Connection Ceremony



Completed expanded 22.46km Paridel Bypass Road in the province of Bulacan



Successful connection of the north and south portals of one of the twin tunnels of the Davao City Bypass Construction Project



Inspection of the newly inaugurated LRT Line 1 Cavite Extension Phase 1



Ongoing Construction of the Camp Aguinaldo Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) © SUMITOMO MITSUI CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD.



Restoring Livelihoods and Enhancing Resilience of Bohol Farmers and Fishermen Affected by Typhoon Odette



Ceremonial opening of the project, "Assistance for Security, Peace, Integration, and Recovery for Advancing Human Security in BARMM (ASPIRE)" in Kabuntalan, Maguindanao del Norte © UNDP PHILIPPINES

terial Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in September 2024, alongside the Philippines, exemplifies our collaborative approach. As fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we are working together to enhance cooperation in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Weaving Together to Fortify Our Long-Lasting Friendship

I hope I have been able to convey just how beautifully each individual thread has contributed to the rich tapestry of Japan-Philippines relations.

As we move forward into the future, we will continue to weave this tapestry together. Thread by thread, we will



Turnover Ceremony for The Project for Raising Voters' Awareness and Promoting Digitalization of Electoral Process in Bangsamoro



Handover ceremony for "The Project for Promoting Digital Birth Registration of Populations at Risk of Statelessness in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)" in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi



Signing Ceremony for "The Project for Promoting Human Security through the Community Economic Development and Livelihood Initiatives in Bangsamoro Region" (CEDAR)

create and enrich the fabric of friendship between our two nations. Let us work hand in hand, weaving a vibrant, rich, and beautiful future for Japan and the Philippines.

Mabuhay ang pagkakabigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!

DEEPENING SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS



Senate Ratification of the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)



Signing and Exchange of Notes for the 2nd Official Security Assistance (OSA) Project



Reception for the 71st Anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) onboard the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessel JS ISE



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels JS ISE & JS SUZUNAMI conduct a port call at Pier 15, Port of Manila.



Japan Coast Guard (JCG) Commandant SEGUCHI Yoshio meets with Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant Ronnie Gil Gavan for the first time



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the Philippine Navy (PN) conduct Bilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) in the South China Sea



Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) participate in BALIKATAN 40-2025 as observers



Japan Coast Guard (JCG) provides capacity building support to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG)



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Turn to D4



Japanese Ambassador to the
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A FRIENDSHIP...

From D1

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THREAD OF BOLSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Economic partnership is another important thread I would like to highlight. Japan has been consistently supporting sustainable development in the Philippines. The past year has seen a significant bolstering of our economic cooperation, with Japan contributing to quality infrastructure projects in the country. These include the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP), the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), and the Davao City Bypass Construction Project — all funded by Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Apart from these projects, this year, we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of JICA’s Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), which has been providing grassroots support for the development of various countries, including the Philippines.

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Japan also continues to extend its steadfast support for the peace process in the Bangsamoro region, through the

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PEOPLE TO PEOPLE AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS



Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting: (L) Japanese Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru (R) Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. © Cabinet Public Affairs Office



Defense Minister NAKATANI Gen and Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. at the Japan-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting



Foreign Minister Takeshi IWAYA and Secretary Enrique Manalo at the Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting © Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan



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ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Ongoing Construction of the Camp Aguinaldo Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) ©Sumitomo Mitsui Construction Co., Ltd.



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JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY - PHILIPPINES



A JICA trainee from Mindanao sharing her agriculture knowledge to women farmers' association under JICA's CDPB ©JICA Philippines



Officials from DOTr, JICA, EOJ, and project contractors celebrate the groundbreaking of the Bulk Supply Substation for the Subway Project ©JICA Philippines



JICA Volunteer YAMAMOTO poses with his counterparts from disaster risk reduction office in La Trinidad ©JICA Philippines



JICA Volunteer NAKAZAWA is assigned in Iloilo to share math education techniques ©JICA Philippines



JICA expert with agricultural worker and farmer beneficiary from BARMM ©JICA Philippines



Tunneling works for the Metro Manila Subway Project constructed through JICA loan ©JICA Philippines

JAPAN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION (JNTO) - PHILIPPINES



JNTO desk at Bon Odori Festival 2025 in Cebu ©JNTO Philippines



Japan pavilion at Travel Madness Expo 2025 ©JNTO Philippines



Japan pavilion at Travel Madness Expo 2025 ©JNTO Philippines

A FRIENDSHIP... From D4

three pillars of the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development (J-BIRD). These efforts encompass capacity-building for the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), assistance in the transformation of former combatant communities into progressive and resilient societies, and the provision of socio-economic development assistance. As we look forward to the first Bangsamoro Parliament elections, we recognize this milestone as a significant stride towards achieving lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

THREAD OF DEEPENING SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS

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As we move forward into the future, we will continue to weave this tapestry together. Thread by thread, we will create and enrich the fabric of friendship between our two nations. Let us work hand in hand, weaving a vibrant, rich, and beautiful future for Japan and the Philippines.

Forces aboard the JMSDF vessel, JS ISE, during its visit at the Port of Manila.

The threads of our bilateral friendship are interwoven with a strong commitment to international peace and security, a tapestry we continue to weave together through active multilateral engagement. This shared dedication is evident in our cooperation on disarmament. Japan's participation in the High-Level Launch Meeting of the Friends of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in September 2024, alongside the Philippines, exemplifies our collaborative approach. As fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we are working together to enhance cooperation in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

WEAVING TOGETHER TO FORTIFY OUR LONG-LASTING FRIENDSHIP

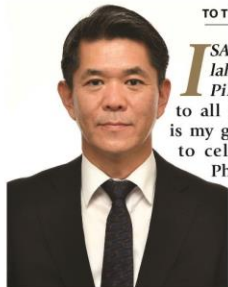
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Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!

A friendship woven in trust: Commemorating 69 years of Japan-Philippines ties

BY JAPANESE AMBASSADOR
TO THE PHILIPPINES KAZUYA ENDO



ISANG mainit na pagbati sa lahat ngaking mga kaibigang Pilipino (Warm greetings to all my Filipino friends). It is my great pleasure and honor to celebrate the 69th Japan-Philippines Friendship Day with you today.



JAPAN-PHILIPPINES
FRIENDSHIP DAY



DEEPENING RELATIONS (From left) Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. shake hands during the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting. PHOTO FROM THE CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

LINKING JAPAN TO PH

Photo shows Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Kazuya Endo. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES

As we commemorate this special occasion, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the ongoing Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and in particular, the Philippine Pavilion. I had the privilege of visiting the Philippine Pavilion twice, first during the Philippine National Day and [second] during the visit of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and first lady Louise Araneta-Marcos.

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► Japan-Philippines Ties D1

"As we approach the 70th year of friendship between Japan and the Philippines next year, I hope we can all work together to find more opportunities to make this incoming milestone truly memorable for all." - Japanese Ambassador Kazuya Endo

JAPAN-PHILIPPINES TIES FROM D1

A Friendship Woven in Trust



PORT OF CALL Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels JS ISE and JS Suzunami conduct a port call at Pier 15, Port of Manila. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES

Furthermore, my wife and I have been delightedly grateful to have participated in many events celebrating our two countries' cultures here in the Philippines. Rooting for our Japanese volleyball teams together with Filipino fans, sharing the art of Nihon Buyo or traditional dance on the occasion of Japan's National Day Celebration, interacting with young Filipino university students, appreciating beautiful Ikebana arrangements and singing along to the Filipino-Japanese jazz band, who performed at my humble residence, were among my fondest memories with our Filipino friends thus far.

Vibrant visits of dignitaries have always been a reflection of the importance of our bilateral relations. In the time of growing volatility and complexity, neighboring countries that have shared fundamental values and strategic interests are ever more important.

During the first half of the year, the Philippines welcomed a series of visits from Japanese Cabinet Ministers, who were generously greeted with the iconic brand of Philippine hospitality.

In January, we warmly received Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya, followed by Defense Minister Gen Nakatani in February. Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Hiromasa Nakano also made his visit in April. These visits culminated in the first official visit of Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba to the Philippines in April, marking the second visit by a Japanese prime minister under the Marcos administration.

Thread of bolstering economic growth and sustainable development

Economic partnership is another important thread I would like to highlight. Japan has been consistently supporting sustainable development in the Philippines.

The past year has seen a significant bolstering of our economic cooperation with Japan contributing to quality infrastructure projects in the country. These include the Metro Manila Subway Project or MMSP, the North-South Commuter Railway or NSCR and the Davao City Bypass Construction Project — all funded by Japan's Official Development Assistance or ODA through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Apart from these projects, this year, we would also celebrate the 60th anniversary of JICA's Japan Overseas Cooperation Agency (JOCA).

Japan-Philippines Ties D3



STRATEGIC MARITIME DEFENSE Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Philippine Navy conduct bilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity or MCA in the South China Sea on June 14, 2025. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES



FIRST HANDSHAKE Japan Coast Guard Commandant Seguchi Yoshio meets with Philippine Coast Guard Commandant Ronnie Gil Gavan for the first time. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES



MAINTAINING SUBMARINE CABLES Japanese Ambassador Kazuya Endo attends the commissioning of the submarine cable maintenance vessel, the VEGA II. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES



CULTURAL EXCHANGE Japanese traditional dance group Senju Buyudan conducts workshops at Philippine universities. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT Japanese Ambassador Kazuya Endo leads the handover ceremony for 'The project for promoting digital birth registration of populations at Risk of Statelessness in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Barmm)' in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES



IN PROGRESS The photo shows the ongoing construction of Camp Aguinaldo Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project. PHOTO FROM SUMITOMO MITSUI CONSTRUCTION CO. LTD.



KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER A Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) trainee from Mindanao shares her agriculture knowledge to women farmers' association under JICA's Capacity Development Project for Bangsamoro or CDBP. PHOTO FROM JICA PHILIPPINES



PEACE WITH JOLIBEE Ambassador Kazuya Endo poses with well-loved Filipino fast-food chain Jollibee mascot. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES



TRAINING SUPPORT Japan Coast Guard provides capacity building support to the Philippine Coast Guard. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES



SERVING TOGETHER Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) volunteer Yamamoto (center) poses with his local counterparts from the disaster risk reduction office in La Trinidad, Philippines. PHOTO FROM JICA PHILIPPINES



PROMOTING JAPAN The photo shows Japan pavilion at the Travel Madness Expo 2025. PHOTO FROM JAPAN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION PHILIPPINES



SHOWCASING JAPAN'S BEAUTY Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) participates at Bon Odori Festival 2025 in Cebu. PHOTO FROM JNTO PHILIPPINES



CELEBRATION OF CULTURE Nihongo Fiesta 2025 held at the Red Carpet Cinema, Shangri-La Plaza, Mandaluyong City. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES

■ JAPAN-PHILIPPINES TIES FROM D2

eration Volunteers or IOCV, which has been providing grassroots support for the development of various countries, including the Philippines.

The strong economic ties between Japan and the Philippines are the cornerstone of our friendship. Japan remains as one of the top investors in the Philippines, especially in Philippine Economic Zone Authority or PEZA locations.

With cumulative investments exceeding P550 billion and direct employment of over 300,000 Filipinos, these have significantly impacted our economies. Following the relaxation of foreign ownership rules in retail, we've recently welcomed several prominent Japanese brands. Nitro opened its first store in 2024, shortly after I assumed my post last year. In addition, Mitsuokoshi BGC opened in mid-2023. These are landmarks in the growing Japanese retail presence in our market.

Japan also continues to extend its steadfast support for the peace process in the Bangsamoro region, through the three pillars of the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development or J-BIRD. These efforts encompass capacity-building for the Bangsamoro Transition Authority or BTA, assistance in the transformation of former combatant communities into progressive and resilient societies, and the provision of socioeconomic development assistance.

As we look forward to the first Bangsamoro Parliament elections, we recognize this milestone as a significant stride toward achieving lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

Thread of deepening security partnerships

The security cooperation thread is a growing evidence of our deepening trust, driven by our shared commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific or FOIP. This concept, promoting peace, stability and prosperity across the region through ensuring rules-based international order, has certainly been realized by our bilateral cooperation.

The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement or RAA signed in July 2024, for instance, has emerged as a landmark achievement for our two countries. Its unanimous approval by the Philippine Senate in December of the same year and its approval by the Japanese Diet last June underscore our shared commitment to regional peace and stability.

In the recently held Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting, our two leaders further agreed to commence negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement or ACSA. The meeting also confirmed the importance of an early conclusion of an Agreement on the Security of Information.

On another promising front, Japan's unwavering support for the Philippines' security capabilities remained well represented through our Official Security Assistance (OSA) scheme. At present, the Philippines has held the distinction of being the first recipient of the OSA as well as the only country to have been granted OSA funding for two consecutive years.

Japan has been further conducting a feasibility study for the OSA



IMPROVING CLIMATE RESILIENCE Officials inaugurate the Cagayan de Oro River Basin Flood Forecasting and Warning Center in Misamis Oriental. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES

for the third year. We have also witnessed the frequent conduct of maritime cooperative activities and increased port visits by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels in the country. This year, in fact, we had the honor of hosting the 71st anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces aboard the JMSDF vessel, JS ISE, during its visit at the Port of Manila.

The threads of our bilateral friendship are interwoven with a strong commitment to international peace and security — a tapestry we continue to weave together through active multilateral engagement.

This shared dedication has been evident in our cooperation on disarmament. Japan's participation in the high-level launch meeting of the Friends of the Fisile Material Cut-off Treaty or FMCT in September 2024, alongside the Philippines, exemplified our collaborative approach. As fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we have been working together to enhance cooperation in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Weaving together to fortify our long-lasting friendship

I hope I have been able to convey just how beautifully each individual thread has contributed to the



RECOGNIZING ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE Ambassador Kazuya Endo congratulates two-time Olympic gold medalist gymnast Carlos Yulo. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES

thread, we will create and enrich the fabric of friendship between our two nations. Let us work hand in hand, weaving a vibrant, rich and beautiful future for Japan and

the Philippines.
Matuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas! (Long live the friendship between Japan and the Philippines!).



PATRON OF ART Akiko Endo, spouse of Japanese Ambassador Kazuya Endo, attends the Japan Film Festival 2025 by the Japan Foundation Manila. PHOTO FROM THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THE PHILIPPINES



MUTUAL LEARNING A Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) expert is joined by an agricultural worker and farmer beneficiary from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines. PHOTO FROM JICA PHILIPPINES

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MANILA, PHILIPPINES | WEDNESDAY, 23 JULY 2025

PBBM okays P6.7-T 2026 national budget

BY LADE JEAN KARAGANI
@tribunephil_Lade

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has approved the proposed P6.769-trillion national budget for fiscal year 2026, Malacañang said Tuesday. Presidential Communications Undersecretary and Palace Press Officer Claire Castro said the proposed budget underscores the administration's commitment to uplifting the lives of all Filipinos and

Turn to page A2

Palace airs concern over Chinese incursion in WPS

PAGE 2

Go inaugurates Kalinga health center

PAGE THREE



A FRIENDSHIP WOVEN IN TRUST: Commemorating 69 years of Japan-Philippines ties

AS WE MOVE FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO WEAVE THIS TAPESTRY TOGETHER, THREAD BY THREAD. WE WILL CREATE AND ENRICH THE FABRIC OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS. LET US WORK HAND IN HAND, WEAVING A VIBRANT, RICH, AND BEAUTIFUL FUTURE FOR JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES. **MABUHAY ANG PAGKAKABIGAN NG JAPAN AT PILIPINAS!**



I was raised in a small town in Japan. I grew up with a strong sense of community and a deep appreciation for the values of respect, harmony, and hard work. These values are the foundation of our Japanese culture and the backbone of our nation's success. As we commemorate this special occasion, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the enduring friendship between Japan and the Philippines.

JAPANESE Ambassador to the Philippines KAZUO ENDO



FOREIGN Minister Takeshi MAEDA and Secretary Enrique Manalo at the Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting



DEFENSE Minister NAKANO Gen and Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. at the Japan-Philippines Defense Ministers' Meeting



February Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism NAKANO Hirokazu also made his visit in April. These visits culminated in the first official visit of Prime Minister ISHIBARA Shigeru to the Philippines in April – marking the second visit by a Japanese prime minister under the Ma administration.

Thread of bolstering economic growth and sustainable development

Economic partnership is another important thread I would like to highlight. Japan has been consistently supporting sustainable development in the Philippines. The past year has seen a significant bolstering of our economic cooperation, with Japan contributing to quality infrastructure projects in the country. These include the Metro Manila Subway Project (MNSP), the North-South Comuter Railway (NSCR), and the Davao City Bay Bridge Construction Project – all funded by Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Apart from these projects, this year, we also celebrate the 6th anniversary of JICA Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), which has been providing grassroots support for the development of various countries, including the Philippines. The strong economic ties



HELLO JAPAN provides educational courses on Japanese culture to schools and private organizations.

OMEXT. Meanwhile, the acquisition of our Filipino ODA (Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship) Fellows and JOCV (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) has been particularly noteworthy. In January, the Philippines welcomed a series of visits from Japanese Cabinet Ministers who were generally greeted with the warmest of welcomes.

Foreign Minister IWATA Takeshi, followed by Defense Minister NAKANO Gen in the occasion of Japan's National Day Celebration, interacting with young Filipino university students, appreciating beautiful Japanese arts and crafts, and staying along to the Philippine-Japanese Jazz band who performed at my humble residence are among my fond memories with our Filipino friends thus far.

Vibrant visits of dignitaries are always a reflection of the importance of our bilateral relations. In the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme and recipients of the Japanese Government Scholarship

SENJU Bayan performs at SM Atrium, Taguig.



ONGOING Construction of the Camp Aguinaldo Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MNSP).

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: SANYO MOTOR CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD.



JICA Volunteer NAKANO Gen is assigned in Tokyo to share math education techniques.



JICA Coast Guard (JCG) Commander SEGUCHI Yoshio meets with Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commander Romeo Gil Ganan for the first time.



JICA expert with agricultural worker and farmer beneficiary from BARMM.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JICA PHILIPPINES



JAPAN Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels JS SE & JS SUZUNAMI conduct a port call at Port 15, Port of Manila.



RESTORING Livelihoods and Enhancing Resilience of Bofed Farmers and Fishers Affected by Typhoon Odette.



RECEPTION for the 70th Anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) onboard the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessel JS SE.



of an early conclusion of an Agreement on the Security of Information.

On another promising front, Japan's unwavering support for the Philippines' security capabilities remains well represented through our Official Security Assistance (OSA) scheme. At present, the Philippines holds the distinction of being the first recipient of the OSA, as well as the only country to have been granted OSA funding for two consecutive years. Japan is further conducting a feasibility study for the OSA for the third year. We have also witnessed the frequent conduct of Maritime Cooperative Activities (MCA) and increased port visits by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels in the country. This year, in fact, we had the honor of hosting the 70th Anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Force aboard the JMSDF vessel JS SE, during its visit at the Port of Manila.

The thread of our bilateral friendship are intertwined with a strong commitment to international peace and security, a legacy we continue to weave together through active multilateral engagement. This shared dedication is evident in our cooperation on disarmament. Japan's participation in the High-Level Launch Meeting of the Friends of the Missile Maritime Out-of-Order Treaty (FMMOT) in September 2024, alongside the Philippines, exemplifies our collaborative approach. As fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we are working together to enhance cooperation in missile disarmament and nonproliferation.

Weaving together to fortify our long-lasting friendship

I hope I have been able to convey just how beautifully each individual thread has contributed to the rich tapestry of Japan-Philippines relations. As we move forward into the future, we will continue to weave this tapestry together. Thread by thread, we will create and enrich the fabric of friendship between our two nations. Let us work hand in hand, weaving a vibrant, rich, and beautiful future for Japan and the Philippines.

Makabayang ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!

JAPANESE traditional dance group Senju Bayan conducts workshops at Philippine universities.

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PHILIPPINES-JAPAN
FRIENDSHIP DAY
2025

BusinessWorld

special feature



A Friendship Woven in Trust: Commemorating 69 Years of Japan-Philippines Ties

By Kazuya Endo

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines

ISANG MAINIT na pagbati sa lahat ng aking mga kaibigang Pilipino! (Warm greetings to all my Filipino friends!) It is my great pleasure and honor to celebrate with you today the 69th Japan-Philippines Friendship Day.

As we commemorate this special occasion, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the ongoing Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and, in particular the Philippine Pavilion. I had the privilege of visiting the Philippine Pavilion twice — first, during the Philippine National Day and again during the visit of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. and First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos. On both occasions, I was deeply impressed by the thoughtful presentation of the Pavilion and particularly its symbolic theme — “Woven.” When I heard and experienced this theme, I found myself thinking: this



Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines
Kazuya Endo

theme is a perfect metaphor for the entirety of Japan-Philippines relations.

The ties that bind our two nations are like a tapestry woven from various threads of trust. And those threads — be it people-to-people and cultural ties, or economic and security partnerships

— are woven together to create a vivid, rich, and beautiful tapestry called Japan-Philippines relations. Using this metaphor, let me illustrate some of the threads we’ve woven together lately that add a new color and design to our partnership.

THREAD OF FOSTERING ENDURING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

As our cooperation grows from strength to strength, robust people-to-people and cultural ties continue to play a role in the foundational thread of our trust. In my various visits across the Philippines’ vast regions, I’ve been truly overwhelmed by the local support for our bilateral partnership. It has been particularly heartwarming to witness our Filipino friends’ deep interest in and shared love for Japanese culture, clearly demonstrated by the record-high of over 820,000 Filipino visitors to Japan last year. With the recent opening of the Japan Visa Application Center (JVAC), we are optimistic about sustaining this encouraging trend in the years ahead.



Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting: (L) Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru and (R) Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

With tourism a promising source of shared experiences, our ties continue to find renewal through the personal encounters Filipinos have with Japa-

nese culture. In our lively receptions at the Ambassador’s Residence, I’ve had the privilege of hearing about the last-
Friendship, S3/2



Defense Minister Nakatani Gen and Secretary Gilberto Teodoro, Jr. at the Japan-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting

Friendship, from S3/1

ing friendships and experiences forged by Filipino participants in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme and recipients of the Japanese Government Scholarship (MEXT). Meanwhile, the aspirations of our Filipino JDS (Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship) Fellows and SSEA-YP (Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program) delegates have also been a glowing testament to deepening people-to-people exchanges with the Philippines.

Furthermore, my wife and I are delightedly grateful to have participated in many events celebrating our two countries' cultures here in the Philippines. Rooting for our Japanese volleyball teams together with Filipino fans, sharing the art of Nihon Buyo or traditional dance on the occasion of Japan's National Day Celebration, interacting with young Filipino university students, appreciating beautiful Ikebana arrangements, and singing along to the Filipino-Japanese jazz band who performed at my humble residence are among my fondest memories with our Filipino friends thus far.

Vibrant visits of dignitaries are always a reflection of the importance of our bilateral relations. In the time of growing volatility and complexity, neighboring countries that share fundamental values and strategic interests are ever more important. During the first half of the year, the Philippines welcomed a series of visits from Japanese Cabinet Ministers who were generously greeted with the iconic brand of Philippine hospitality. In January, we warmly received Foreign Minister Iwata Takeshi, followed by Defense Minister Nakatani Gen in February. Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism Nakano Hirofumi also made his visit in April. These visits culminated in the first official visit of Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru to the Philippines in April — marking the second visit by a Japanese prime minister under the Marcos administration.

THREAD OF BOLSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Economic partnership is another important thread I would like to highlight. Japan has been consistently supporting sustainable development in the Philippines. The past year has seen a significant bolstering of our economic cooperation, with Japan contributing to quality infrastructure projects in the country. These include the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSF), the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), and the Davao City Bypass Construction Project — all funded by Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Apart from these projects, this year, we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of JICA's Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), which has been providing grassroots support for the development of various countries, including the Philippines.

The strong economic ties between Japan and the Philippines are the cornerstone of our friendship. Japan remains as one of the top investors in the Philippines, especially in Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) locations. With cumulative investments exceeding P550 billion and direct employment of over 300,000



Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwata and Secretary Enrique Manalo at the Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting



Opening of the Japan Visa Application Center in Parañaque City (JVAC)

Philippines, these significantly impact our economies. Following the relaxation of foreign ownership rules in retail, we've recently welcomed several prominent Japanese brands. Nitori opened its first store in 2024, shortly after I assumed my post last year. In addition, Mitsuokoshi BGC opened in mid-2023. These are landmarks in the growing Japanese retail presence in our market.

Japan also continues to extend its steadfast support for the peace process in the Bangsamoro region, through the three pillars of the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development (J-BIRD). These efforts encompass capacity-building for the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), assistance in the transformation of former combatant communities into progressive and resilient societies, and the provision of socioeconomic development assistance. As we look forward to the first Bangsamoro Parliament elections, we recognize this milestone as a significant stride towards achieving lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

THREAD OF DEEPENING SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS

The security cooperation thread is growing evidence of our deepening trust, driven by our shared commitment to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). This concept, promoting peace, stability, and prosperity across the region through ensuring rules-based international order, has certainly been realized by our bilateral cooperation. The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) signed in July 2024, for instance, has emerged as a landmark achievement for our two countries. Its unanimous approval by the Philippine Senate in December of the same year and its approval by the Japanese Diet last June underscore our shared commitment to regional peace and stability. In the recently held Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting, our two leaders further agreed to commence negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The meeting also confirmed the importance of an early conclusion of an Agreement on the Security of Information.

On another promising front, Japan's unwavering support for the Philippines' security capabilities remains well represented through our Official Security Assistance (OSA) scheme. At present, the Philippines holds

the distinction of being the first recipient of the OSA, as well as the only country to have been granted OSA funding for two consecutive years. Japan is further conducting a feasibility study for the OSA for the third year. We have also witnessed the frequent conduct of Maritime Cooperative Activities (MCA) and increased port visits by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels in the country. This year, in fact, we had the honor of hosting the 71st Anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces aboard the JMSDF vessel, JS ISE, during its visit at the Port of Manila.

The threads of our bilateral friendship are interwoven with a strong commitment to international peace and security, a tapestry we continue to weave together through active multilateral engagement. This shared dedication is evident in our cooperation on disarmament. Japan's participation in the High-Level Launch Meeting of the Friends of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in September 2024, alongside the Philippines, exemplifies our collaborative approach. As fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we are working together to enhance cooperation in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

WEAVING TOGETHER TO FORTIFY OUR LONG-LASTING FRIENDSHIP

I hope I have been able to convey just how beautifully each individual thread has contributed to the rich tapestry of Japan-Philippines relations.

As we move forward into the future, we will continue to weave this tapestry together. Thread by thread, we will create and enrich

the fabric of friendship between our two nations. Let us work hand in hand, weaving a vibrant, rich, and beautiful future for Japan and the Philippines.

Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas! (Long live the friendship of Japan and the Philippines!)



Japan Coast Guard (JCG) Commandant Seguchi Yoshio meets with Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant Ronnie Gil Gavan for the first time.



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the Philippine Navy (PN) conduct Bilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) in the South China Sea.



JICA volunteer Nakazawa is assigned in Iloilo to share math education techniques.



Ongoing construction of the Camp Aguinaldo Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSF)



Successful connection of the north and south portals of one of the twin tunnels of the Davao City Bypass Construction Project



Turnover Ceremony for the Project for Raising Voters' Awareness and Promoting Digitalization of Electoral Process in Bangsamoro



Japanese strawberries make inroads to Mitsukoshi Mall following successful talks between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF) and Philippine authorities.



Reception for the 71st Anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JDSF) onboard the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessel JS ISE



Ambassador Endo Kazuya and Madame Endo Akiko watch volleyball invitations between Philippine National Teams Alas Pilipinas and Japanese powerhouses SAGA Hisamitsu Springs and Osaka Bluteon.



President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. and First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos visit the Philippine Pavilion at the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan.



Officials from DoTr, JICA, EOJ, and project contractors celebrate the groundbreaking of the Bulk Supply Substation for the Subway Project.



Japan pavilion at Travel Madness Expo 2025



Thread of bolstering economic growth and sustainable development



Original construction of the Cebu-Ayala Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MSP)

Economic partnership is another important thread I would like to highlight. Japan has been consistently supporting sustainable development in the Philippines. The past year has seen a significant bolstering of our economic cooperation, with Japan contributing to priority infrastructure projects in the country. These include the Metro Manila Subway Project (MSP), the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), and the Denza City Bypass Construction Project—all funded by Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Apart from these projects, this year, we also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Japan-Philippines Economic Cooperation Agreement (JPECA), which has been providing grassroots support for the development of various countries, including the Philippines.



Successful completion of the earth-retention work of the Denza City Bypass Construction Project

The strong economic ties between Japan and the Philippines are the cornerstone of our friendship. Japan remains as one of the top investors in the Philippines, especially in Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) locations, with cumulative investments exceeding P550 billion and direct employment of over 200,000 Filipinos, these significantly impact our economies. Following the relaxation of foreign ownership rules in retail, we recently welcomed several prominent Japanese brands. Nilson opened its first store in 2014, shortly after I assumed my post last year. In addition, Mitsubishi OSC opened in mid-2023. These are landmarks in the growing Japanese retail presence in our market.

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Thread of deepening security partnerships



Signing Ceremony of the Regional Access Agreement (RAA)

The security cooperation thread is growing evidence of our deepening trust, driven by our shared commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOP). This concept, promoting peace, stability, and prosperity across the region through rules-based international order has certainly been realized by our bilateral cooperation. The Japan-Philippines Regional Access Agreement (RAA) signed in July 2014, for instance, has emerged as a landmark achievement for our two countries. Its unanimous approval by the Philippine Senate in December of the same year and its approval by the Japanese Diet last June underscores our shared commitment to regional peace and stability. In the recently held Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting, our two leaders further agreed to commence negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The meeting also confirmed the importance of an early conclusion of an Agreement on the Security of Information.



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessel, JS-186, R. S. S. (JMSDF) conducted a port call at Port 15, Port of Manila.

On another promising front, Japan's unwavering support for the Philippines' security capabilities remains well represented through our Official Security Assistance (OSA) scheme. At present, the Philippines holds the distinction of being the first recipient of the OSA, as well as the only country to have been granted OSA funding for two consecutive years. Japan is further conducting a feasibility study for the OSA for the third year. We have also witnessed the frequent conduct of Maritime Cooperative Anti-Piracy (MCA) and increased port visits by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels in this country. This year, in fact, we had the honor of hosting the 71st Anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces aboard the JMSDF vessel, JS-186, during its visit at the Port of Manila.

The threads of our bilateral friendship are intertwined with a strong commitment to international peace and security, a testament we continue to weave together through our multilateral engagement. This shared dedication is evident in our cooperation on disarmament, Japan's participation in the High-Level Launch Meeting of the Friends of the Health/Material Cut-off Treaty (HMCOT) in September 2024, alongside the Philippines, exemplifies our collaborative approach. As fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we are working together to advance cooperation in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Weaving together to fortify our long-lasting friendship



JICA Volunteer SALA/CHICA is assigned to help in class with support on English lessons

I hope I have been able to convey just how beautifully each individual thread has contributed to the rich tapestry of Japan-Philippines relations.

As we move forward into the future, we will continue to weave this tapestry together. Thread by thread, we will create and enrich the fabric of friendship between our two nations. Let us work hand in hand, weaving a vibrant, rich, and beautiful future for Japan and the Philippines.

Mabuhay ang pagkakaibang ng Japan at Pilipinas!





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A tapestry of trust: Celebrating enduring Japan-Philippines relations

BY NIKKI LIMLENGCO

As Japan and the Philippines commemorate the 69th Japan-Philippines Friendship Day, we honor a partnership that has grown more resilient, dynamic, and meaningful with each passing year. Over nearly seven decades, our nations have woven a vibrant tapestry of friendship—one whose threads are enriched by mutual trust, cultural exchanges, economic cooperation, and

a steadfast commitment to peace and security. Ambassador ENDO's heartfelt message for this year's celebration beautifully captures the spirit of our bilateral ties, likening them to a tapestry where each shared experience, collaborative project, and act of goodwill adds new color to the intricate design of our relationship.

Today, these threads of friendship stretch across generations and sectors, from people-to-people connections—such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme and student scholarships—to momentous in-

frastructure collaborations and ever-deepening security partnerships. Whether through cultural celebrations, boom in tourism, or groundbreaking agreements like the Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement, both nations continue to fortify their bond as neighbors sharing common values and aspirations. As we reflect on this rich history and look to a future of greater cooperation, we celebrate not just milestones but the everyday acts, big and small, that allow Japan and the Philippines to thrive as true friends and trusted partners.

A Friendship Woven in Trust: Commemorating 69 Years of Japan-Philippines Ties

A message from His Excellency,
Ambassador ENDO Kazuya

Isang mainit na pagbati sa lahat ng ating mga kaibigang Pilipino! It is my great pleasure and honor to celebrate with you today the 69th Japan-Philippines Friendship Day.

As we commemorate this special occasion, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the ongoing Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and, in particular the Philippine Pavilion. I had the privilege of visiting the Philippine Pavilion twice — first, during the Philippine National Day and again dur-

ing the visit of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos. On both occasions, I was deeply impressed by the thoughtful presentation of the Pavilion and particularly its symbolic theme — "Woven." When I heard and experienced this theme, I found myself thinking: this theme is a perfect metaphor for the entirety of Japan-Philippines relations.

The ties that bind our two nations are like a tapestry woven from various threads of trust. And those threads — be it people-to-people and cultural ties, or economic

and security partnerships — are woven together to create a vivid, rich, and beautiful tapestry called Japan-Philippines relations. Using this metaphor, let me illustrate some of the threads we've woven together lately that add a new color and design to our partnership.

Thread of Fostering Enduring People-to-People and Cultural Connections
As our cooperation grows from strength

A Friendship | C2



Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Kazuya ENDO

A Friendship from Page C1



Defense Minister NAKATANI Gen and Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. at the Japan-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting



President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. & First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos visit the Philippine Pavilion at the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan | ©Presidential Communications Office



Restoring Livelihoods and Enhancing Resilience of Bohol Farmers and Fisherfolk Affected by Typhoon Odette



Ongoing Construction of the Camp Aguinaldo Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSPP) | ©Sumitomo Mitsui Construction Co., Ltd.



Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) participate in BALIKATAN 40-2025 as observers

to strength, robust people-to-people and cultural ties continue to play a role in the foundational thread of our trust. In my various visits across the Philippines' vast regions, I've been truly overwhelmed by the local support for our bilateral partnership. It has been particularly heartwarming to witness our Filipino friends' deep interest in and shared love for Japanese culture, clearly demonstrated by the record-high of over 820,000 Filipino visitors to Japan last year. With the recent opening of the Japan Visa Application Center (JVAC), we are optimistic about sustaining this encouraging trend in the years ahead.

With tourism a promising source of shared experiences, our ties continue to find renewal through the personal encounters Filipinos have with Japanese culture. In our lively receptions at the Ambassador's Residence, I've had the privilege of hearing about the lasting friendships and experiences forged by Filipino participants in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme and recipients of the Japanese Government Scholarship (MEXT). Meanwhile, the aspirations of our Filipino JDS (Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship) Fellows and SSEAYP (Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program) delegates have also been a glowing testament to deepening people-to-people exchanges with the Philippines.

Furthermore, my wife and I are delightedly grateful to have participated in many events celebrating our two countries' cultures here in the Philippines. Rooting for our Japanese volleyball teams together with Filipino fans, sharing the art of Nihon Buyo or traditional dance on the occasion of Japan's National Day Celebration, interacting with young Filipino university students, appreciating beautiful Ikebana arrangements, and singing along to the Filipino-Japanese jazz band who performed at my humble residence are among my fondest memories with our Filipino friends thus far.

Vibrant visits of dignitaries are always a reflection of the importance of our bilateral relations. In the time of growing volatility and complexity, neighboring countries that share fundamental values and strategic interests are ever more important. During the first half of the year, the Philippines welcomed a series of visits from Japanese Cabinet Ministers who were generously greeted with the iconic brand of Philippine hospitality. In January, we warmly received Foreign Minister IWAYA Takeshi, followed by Defense Minister NAKATANI Gen in February. Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism NAKANO Hiromasa also made his visit in April. These visits culminated in the first official visit of Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru to the Philippines in April — marking the sec-

ond visit by a Japanese prime minister under the Marcos administration.

Thread of Bolstering Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

Economic partnership is another important thread I would like to highlight. Japan has been consistently supporting sustainable development in the Philippines. The past year has seen a significant bolstering of our economic cooperation, with Japan contributing to quality infrastructure projects in the country. These include the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSPP), the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), and the Davao City Bypass Construction Project — all funded by Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Apart from these projects, this year, we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of JICA's Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), which has been providing grassroots support for the development of various countries, including the Philippines.

The strong economic ties between Japan and the Philippines are the cornerstone of our friendship. Japan remains as one of the top investors in the Philippines, especially in Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) locations. With cumulative investments exceeding Php 550 billion and direct employment of over 300,000 Filipinos, these significantly impact our economies. Following the relaxation of foreign ownership rules in retail, we've recently

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A Friendship from Page C2



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the Philippine Navy (PN) conduct Bilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) in the South China Sea



A JICA trainee from Mindanao sharing her agriculture knowledge to women farmers' association under JICA's CDPB | ©JICA Philippines

welcomed several prominent Japanese brands. Nitro opened its first store in 2024, shortly after I assumed my post last year. In addition, Mitsu-koshi BGC opened in mid-2023. These are landmarks in the growing Japanese retail presence in our market.

Japan also continues to extend its steadfast support for the peace process in the Bangsamoro region, through the three pillars of the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development (J-BIRD). These efforts encompass capacity-building for the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), assistance in the transformation of former combatant communities into progressive and resilient societies, and the provision of socio-economic development assistance. As we look forward to the first Bangsamoro Parliament elections, we recognize this milestone as a significant stride towards achieving lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

Thread of Deepening Security Partnerships

The security cooperation thread is growing evidence of our deepening trust, driven by our shared commitment to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). This concept, promoting peace, stability, and prosperity across the region through ensuring rules-based international order, has certainly been realized by our bilateral cooperation. The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) signed in July 2024, for instance, has emerged as a landmark achievement for our two countries. Its unanimous approval by the Philippine Senate in December of the same year and its approval by the Japanese Diet last June underscore our shared commitment to regional peace and stability. In the recently held Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting, our two leaders further agreed to commence negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The meeting also confirmed the importance of an early conclusion of an Agreement on the Security of Information.

On another promising front, Japan's unwavering

support for the Philippines' security capabilities remains well represented through our Official Security Assistance (OSA) scheme. At present, the Philippines holds the distinction of being the first recipient of the OSA, as well as the only country to have been granted OSA funding for two consecutive years. Japan is further conducting a feasibility study for the OSA for the third year. We have also witnessed the frequent conduct of Maritime Cooperative Activities (MCA) and increased port visits by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels in the country. This year, in fact, we had the honor of hosting the 71st Anniversary of the Japan Self-Defense Forces aboard the JMSDF vessel, JS ISE, during its visit at the Port of Manila.

The threads of our bilateral friendship are interwoven with a strong commitment to international peace and security, a tapestry we continue to weave together through active multilateral engagement. This shared dedication is evident in our cooperation on disarmament. Japan's participation in the High-Level Launch Meeting of the Friends of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in September 2024, alongside the Philippines, exemplifies our collaborative approach. As fellow members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, we are working together to enhance cooperation in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Weaving Together to Fortify Our Long-Lasting Friendship

I hope I have been able to convey just how beautifully each individual thread has contributed to the rich tapestry of Japan-Philippines relations.

As we move forward into the future, we will continue to weave this tapestry together. Thread by thread, we will create and enrich the fabric of friendship between our two nations. Let us work hand in hand, weaving a vibrant, rich, and beautiful future for Japan and the Philippines.

Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!



JICA Volunteer NAKAZAWA is assigned in Iloilo to share math education techniques | ©JICA Philippines



JNTO desk at Bon Odori Festival 2025 in Cebu | ©JNTO Philippines



Japan pavilion at Travel Madness Expo 2025 | ©JNTO Philippines

Japan-Philippines Friendship Day



Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting: (L) Japanese Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru (R) Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. © Cabinet Public Affairs Office



Defense Minister NAKATANI Gen and Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. at the Japan-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting



Foreign Minister Takeshi IWAYA and Secretary Enrique Manalo at the Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting © Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan



Opening of the Japan Visa Application Center in Paranaque City (JVAC)

A Friendship Woven in Trust: Commemorating 69 Years of Japan-Philippines Ties

Editor's Note: This is Ambassador ENDO Kazuya's written contribution on the occasion of Japan-Philippines Friendship Day on July 23

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Ambassador Endo poses with well-loved Filipino fast-food chain, Jollibee mascot



Ongoing Construction of the Camp Aguinaldo Station of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSPP) ©Sumitomo Mitsui Construction Co., Ltd.



Commissioning of the submarine cable maintenance vessel, the VEGA II



Nihongo Fiesta 2025 at the Red Carpet Cinema, Shangri-La Plaza, Mandaluyong City



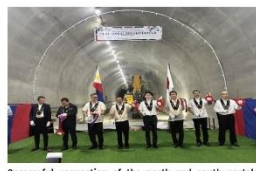
Hello! Japan provides educational courses on Japanese culture to schools and private organizations

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Successful connection of the north and south portals of one of the twin tunnels of the Davao City Bypass Construction Project



JICA Volunteer NAKAZAWA is assigned in Iloilo to share math education techniques ©JICA Philippines



Madame ENDO Akiko attends Japan Film Festival 2025 by the Japan Foundation Manila



Japanese traditional dance performance or "Nihon Buto" at Japan's National Day Celebration



Ambassador ENDO Kazuya attends Cebu Pacific Air's Inauguration Ceremony of the Manila-Chitose Route

Volunteers (JOVC), which has been providing grassroots support for the development of various countries, including the Philippines.

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Inspection of the newly inaugurated LRT Line 1 Cavite Extension Phase I



JNTO desk at Bon Odori Festival 2025 in Cebu ©JNTO Philippines



Embassy of Japan in the Philippines joins the 2024 International Bazaar at the World Trade Center in Pasay City



Turnover ceremony of volleyball supplies from the Japan Volleyball Association (JVA) to the Philippine National Volleyball Federation (PNVF)



Ambassador & Madame Endo visit Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku

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