

JAPAN

NATIONAL DAY

E1

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
features
MONDAY | FEBRUARY 23, 2026

AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE

Threads that bind: On Japan and the Philippines' enduring friendship



Japanese Ambassador to the
Philippines Kazuya ENDO

Today, Japan commemorates the 66th birthday of His Imperial Majesty Naruhito. On this auspicious occasion, I am pleased to share in this celebration with our Filipino friends and the Japanese community in the Philippines.

This year also marks a momentous milestone: the 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship,

celebrated under the theme "Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities." The symbolic anniversary logo, designed by Mr. Edmon Fuerte, a young artist from Baguio, beautifully combines Japan's shimenawa rope with the Filipino abaca fiber. It reflects how our two nations have steadily woven beautiful threads of trust, partnership, and shared hope over seven decades.

▶ Turn to E2



His Majesty the Emperor © IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AGENCY OF JAPAN

Threads that bind...

From E1

LOOKING BACK TO SEVEN DECADES OF TRUST

Since Japan made its solemn pledge to peace and embarked on its postwar path as a peaceful nation, many predecessors on both sides made numerous contributions for these long-term efforts. A hopeful thread in our shared history can be found in President Elpidio Quirino's pardon of Japanese prisoners in 1953. In 1956, the Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement was signed — marking a foundational moment in our bilateral relationship.

The Imperial Family's visits have helped in deepening our bonds. The then His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko paid their maiden visit to the Philippines in 1962, even meeting General Emilio Aguinaldo. 54 years later, in 2016, His Majesty the Emperor Akihito and Her Majesty the Empress Michiko returned to the Philippines for their historic visit for the 60th Anniversary of our friendship — reaffirming the strong foundation of our heightened ties.

In the last seven decades, there have been countless exchanges at various levels, each of which helped lead to our shared mutual understanding. Fast forward to the present, Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae's first face-to-face meeting with a foreign leader after her inauguration was with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in October 2025. In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu visited the Philippines as part of his first bilateral overseas tour. These developments underscore the high priority that Japan places on the Philippines as a close neighbor and trusted strategic partner who shares fundamental values and principles.

FORTIFYING TIES AS PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Our economic partnership is another important thread in this tapestry of friendship. Since the 1960s, Japan has supported the Philippines through Official Development Assistance (ODA), contributing to progress in vital areas such as disaster risk reduction and infrastructure development. This commitment continues today through landmark projects including the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP), the North-South



Years of Philippines - Japan Friendship 日本・フィリピン友好年 1956 - 2026



The 70th Philippines-Japan Friendship Logo designed by Mr. Edmon Fuerte, inspired by Japan's shimenawa rope and the Philippines' abaca fiber

Commuter Railway (NSCR), the Davao City Bypass, and the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project.

On the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's (BARMM) path toward peace, development, and self-reliance, Japan has stood steadily alongside the region. Japan remains committed to advancing peace through dialogue and translating peace into tangible dividends through development.

Japan-Philippines business collaborations continue to flourish. In 2025, Japan was the second largest trading partner and the largest investor for the Philippines. Around 1,600 Japanese companies are operating their businesses in the country.

ADVANCING PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGH COOPERATION

Our security cooperation has likewise evolved in ways that contribute to peace and stability, in line with the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), which entered into force in 2025, has facilitated joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises, demonstrating how interoperability can translate into tangible support for disaster response and resilience-building.

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is another important pillar of our cooperation, aimed at enhancing resilience by strengthening the Philippines' defense capabilities through the provision of essential equipment and capacity-building. Notably, the Philippines is Japan's only partner to have received OSA for 3 consecutive years. Just this February 11, I attended a handover ceremony for 5 coastal surveillance radar systems, as part of the first OSA project, with Department of National Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr.

Japan and the Philippines work closely in multilateral fora to promote peace and prosperity in the region and beyond. We take pride in our long-standing partnership in advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, guided by our shared aspiration for "a world free of nuclear weapons." We are also working hand in hand to address global challenges such as climate change through initiatives like the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), and to advance development cooperation through frameworks such as the Conference on cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD). As the Philippines assumes its important and responsible role as ASEAN Chair this year, Japan will spare no effort in extending its cooperation.

From postwar reconciliation to a comprehensive partnership for peace and prosperity, the Philippines-Japan relationship is a tapestry woven from diplomacy, development, security, and, above all, human connection. As we embark on a year of commemorative events for our 70th anniversary, we warmly invite our Filipino friends and partners to join us in the celebrations, as we continue weaving our future together — toward peace, prosperity, and possibilities for generations to come.

BINDING OUR TIES THROUGH CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Beyond policies and programs, the most enduring strands of our friendship are woven by people — through educational exchanges, cultural interaction, academic cooperation, and everyday friendships. In 2025, 73 Filipino scholars were supported under the MEXT Scholarship Program, and Japan welcomed its first participant from the Philippines in the Young Leaders Program in the field of Healthcare Administration. That same year, 67 young Filipinos embarked on enriching experiences under the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme.

The Osaka Expo 2025 also offered meaningful platforms for people-to-people exchange. Building on this proud legacy, the Philippine Pavilion at the 2025 Expo was awarded the prestigious Silver Award for outstanding design. We once again extend our heartfelt appreciation to the creative Filipino minds behind the pavilion for their contribution to the success of this global event.

Travel, too, has served as a reliable bridge between our cultures. I am delighted to note that Japan welcomed more than 880,000 Filipino visitors in 2025 alone — an encouraging testament to the growing closeness between our peoples.

WEAVING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

All these illustrate how the Japan-Philippines relationship has been shaped over time by many threads of cooperation and friendship. The work of weaving, however, does not end here. As we look ahead this 2026, I hope we can reflect on our future together and identify "new threads" to our growing partnership.

One such thread, in my view, lies in economic cooperation. For decades, Japan has been the leading development partner of the Philippines across a wide range of fields. As our economic ties continue to deepen, we hope to expand our cooperation into new frontiers, including digital and green transformation, space, and broader economic security.

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Prime Minister TAKAICHI Sanae with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in Malaysia © CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Visit of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. in the Metro Manila Subway Project with DOTR Secretary Vince Dizon © JICA



Japanese strawberries, approved for export to the Philippines in December 2024 and first imported in February 2025 © JETRO



Nihongo Partners at Gen. Ricardo G. Papa Sr. Memorial High School © JAPAN FOUNDATION MANILA



Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu offers flowers at Rizal Park during his visit in January 2026



Participants from Japanese companies who joined the BCDA & JBIC Project Pitching Event. © JBIC



Ongoing construction of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City



The Japan Pavilion, together with Japanese suppliers, at the Travel Tour Expo 2026 held at SMX © JNTO



MESSAGE FROM ENDO KAZUYA, JAPANESE AMBASSADOR TO THE PHILIPPINES

Threads that bind: On Japan and the Philippines enduring friendship



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© IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AGENCY OF JAPAN



Years of Philippines - Japan Friendship
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Threads that bind: On Japan and the Philippines enduring friendship

FROM B2-1 the 60th Anniversary of our friendship — reaffirming the strong foundation of our heightened ties.

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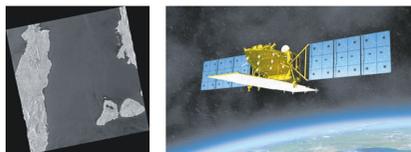
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Prime Minister TAKACHI Sanae with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in Malaysia. © CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) provides emergency observation and satellite images taken by JAXA's ALOS-2 (Advanced Land Observing Satellite-2) following the Cebu earthquake. © JAXA



Philippine Ambassador Felino Neri and Japanese State Minister TAKASAKI Tatsunosuke at the signing of Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement, 9 May 1956. © MANILA BULLETIN



The then His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko with General Emilio Aguinaldo at the balcony of the National Independence Shrine in Cavite. © NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE SHRINE

Advancing peace and security through cooperation

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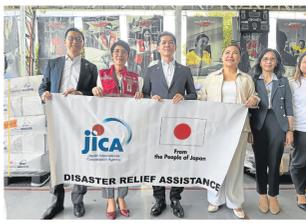
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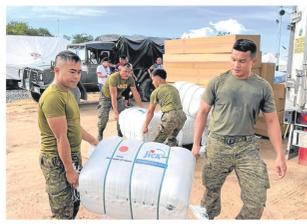
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Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu offers flowers at Rizal Park during his visit in January 2026.



Turning Over Ceremony of emergency relief supplies for Cebu Earthquake. © JICA



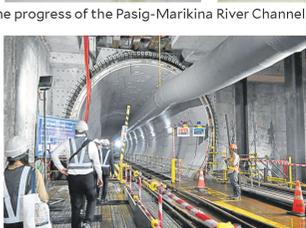
Japan Disaster Relief for Cebu Earthquake. © DSWD



Groundbreaking ceremony for Contract Package 105 of the MMSP.



Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu inspects the progress of the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project in January 2026.



Ongoing construction of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.



Twin Tunnels of Davao Bypass Road - the tunnel breakthrough is now the longest mountain tunnel in the Philippines at 2.3 kilometers. © JICA



Threads that bind: On Japan and the Philippines enduring friendship

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Weaving the future together

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From postwar reconciliation to a comprehensive part-



Sugarcane deep planting cultivation technology in Negros Occidental spearheaded by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS) and Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA).



The General Santos Fish Port Complex developed by Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

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Ambassador Endo serves meals to beneficiaries of "The Project for the Promotion of 'Farm-to-School' Meals Programme Using Locally Harvested Products in BARMM" implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP).



Tokyo Metropolitan Government Lecture on the use of weather info for DRR Training for PAGASA Officials. ©JICA

Unveiling of ODA Marker under the Antenna Tower at the Mindanao PAGASA Regional Services Division. ©JICA



Minister for Economic Affairs YOKOTA Naobumi at the launch of DigiVacc, under "The Project for Supporting Digital Health System for Infectious Diseases Control."

Turnover of equipment to the Tahanang Walang Hagdanan, Inc. (TWHI) for the livelihood support program of persons with disabilities (PWD).



Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Improvement in Bangsamoro Region. ©JICA



Japanese strawberries, approved for export to the Philippines in December 2024 and first imported in February 2025. ©JETRO



At the "Jewels of Japan" event showcasing Japanese strawberries newly exported to the Philippines. ©JETRO



Since their entry into the Philippine market in February 2025, Japanese strawberries have attracted attention for their vibrant appearance and high quality. ©JETRO



Mr. Hiroshi Sagawa, Chief Representative of JBIC Manila Office at BCDA & JBIC PROJECT PITCHING EVENT. ©JBIC



Participants from Japanese companies who joined the BCDA & JBIC PROJECT PITCHING EVENT. ©JBIC



Group photo of presenters at BCDA & JBIC PROJECT PITCHING EVENT & management team of JBIC and BCDA. ©JBIC



Japan and the Philippines facilitate humanitarian support and disaster relief exercises at the DOSHIN BAYANIHAN 5-25 following the RAA Implementation. © PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the Philippine Navy (PN) conduct the 3rd Bilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA).



Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Maria Theresa Lazaro sign and exchange notes for the JPY 900 million "Official Security Assistance (OSA)" FY2025 project.



Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) delegation headed by Chairperson of the Policy Research Council KOBAYASHI Takayuki visits Japan-made BRP Teresa Magbanua of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).



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

Threads that bind: On Japan and the Philippines enduring friendship



Send-off Reception for the 2025 Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholars. © JICA



JDS Batch 23 Send-Off Ceremony with the JDS OC Members. © JICA



Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) 60th Anniversary. © JICA



JICA JOCV Mr. KINOSHITA Tsuyoshi at Ramon Magsaysay College. © JICA



JICA JOCV Ms. KANAZAWA Mikako at Rosario Integrated School. © JICA



Philippine Pavilion at the Expo 2025 featuring 200 handwoven textiles representing the Philippines' 18 regions. © PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE



Young Filipino delegates of the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) Programme "ASEAN-Japan Sports (Football) x SDGS Exchange for Youths." © JICA



The Philippine Pavilion at the Osaka Expo 1970, designed by architect Leandro Locsin. © PHILSTAR.COM



Bunraku performance during the Special Japan Cultural Night in 2025.



Young Filipino delegates of the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) Programme "ASEAN-Japan Sports (Football) x SDGS Exchange for Youths." © JICA



Embassy of Japan conducts Hello! Japan sessions with various schools and groups of students.



Filipino high school students in Hiroshima, Japan during the "JENESYS 2024 Philippine-Japan Cultural Exchange for High School Students."



Christmas exhibition of the Ikenobo Ikebana Society Manila No. 67 (IISM No.67).



Nihongo Partners at Gen. Ricardo G. Papa Sr. Memorial High School. © JAPAN FOUNDATION MANILA

Nihongo Partners at San Pedro Relocation Center National High School. © JAPAN FOUNDATION MANILA



Madame ENDO Akiko and Miss International 2025 Philippine representative Myrna Esguerra perform a traditional Japanese tea ceremony at the Ambassador's residence.



Harmony of Friendship: A Jazz Prelude to 70 Years of Japan-Philippine Ties, the opening event for the 70th Philippines & Japan Friendship Anniversary.



Nihongo Partners courtesy visit to Ambassador Endo. © JAPAN FOUNDATION MANILA



Nihongo Partners and counterpart teachers. © JAPAN FOUNDATION MANILA



Nihongo Partners at Benguet National High School. © JAPAN FOUNDATION MANILA



Nihongo Partners at Marcelo H. Del Pilar National High School. © JAPAN FOUNDATION MANILA



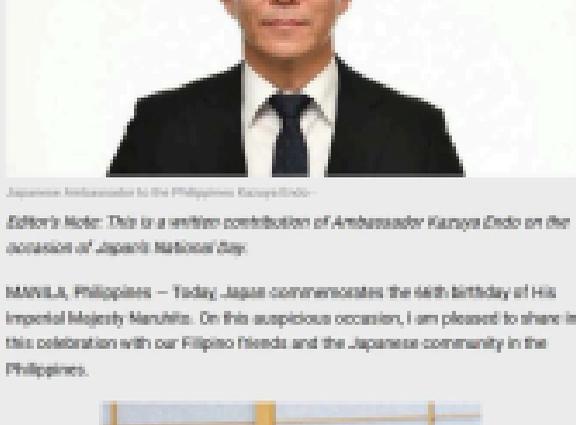
The Japan Pavilion, together with Japanese suppliers, at the Travel Tour Expo 2026, held at SMX. © JNTO



BIZ MEMOS

Threads that bind: On Japan and the Philippines' enduring friendship

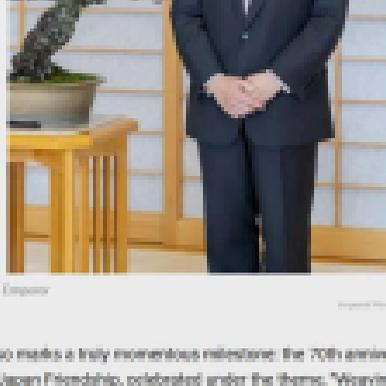
- The Philippine Star
February 22, 2024 | 12:00am



Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Kazuya Edo

Editor's Note: This is a written contribution of Ambassador Kazuya Edo on the occasion of Japan's National Day.

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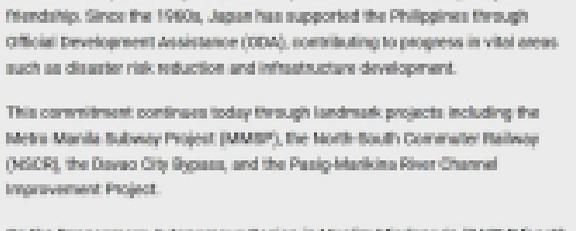


Prime Minister Takachi Sonoo with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in Malaysia.

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Visit of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in the Metro Manila Subway Project with JICA Secretary General, Tokyo Metropolitan Government Liaison on the issue of candidate bids for DBF-TOTting for PM2&3A Contracts.

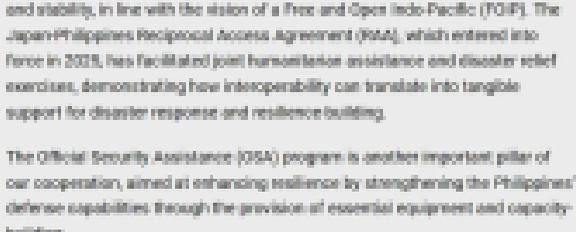
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Group photo of members of JICA and JEDC project planning event, and the management team of JEDC and JICA.

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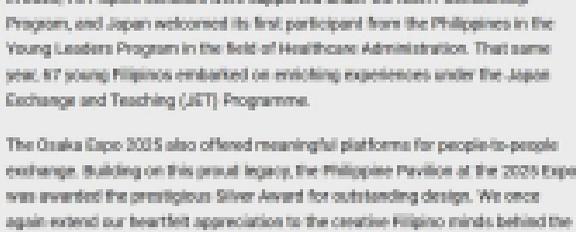
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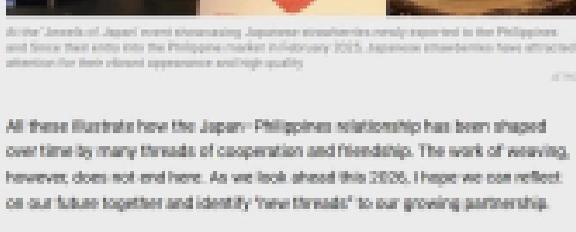
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The Japan Pavilion, together with Japanese suppliers, at the Osaka Expo 2025 held at 2025.

Weaving the future together



Jewels of Japan event showcasing Japanese specialties newly imported to the Philippines and share their taste into the Philippine market celebratory 2023. Japanese specialties have attracted attention for their vibrant appearance and high quality.

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From postwar reconciliation to a comprehensive partnership for peace and prosperity, the Philippines-Japan relationship is a tapestry woven from diplomacy, development, security and, above all, human connection.

As we embark on a year of commemorative events for our 70th anniversary, we warmly invite our Filipino friends and partners to join us in the celebrations, as we continue weaving our future together—toward peace, prosperity and possibilities for generations to come.

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HALL OF FAME
2025

Tapestry
of harmony
and hope



Years of Philippines - Japan Friendship
日本・フィリピン友好年
1956 - 2026

DAILY Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR ① WITHOUT FAVOR

MANILA, PHILIPPINES | MONDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2026



HIS Majesty the Emperor.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AGENCY OF JAPAN

A FUTURE INTERTWINED

Like the famous Japanese silks that make the kimono look like visual poetry, Japan and the Philippines' storied past spanning seven decades and counting is filled with meaning and purpose. Silk, lush and vibrant or subtle and innovative, bears patterns of both tradition and modernity.

Another textile of note born in Japan

is the rustic boro, defined as a patchwork of mended fabrics, a sustainable practice of preserving garments over generations that not only resounds in these times, but also speaks of their culture's resourcefulness and innovation.

Just as the textiles of this great country are borne of meticulous craft nurtured through generations, Japan shows the Philippines its heart — one that has touched our people through decades of growth and of supporting each other.

This is a friendship both countries wear like a badge of honor, and one that will sustain both through times of great change, inspired by the Emperor Naruhito and the Reiwa era, where "beautiful harmony" is upheld amid many global milestones and upheavals.

Emperor Naruhito celebrates his 66th birthday today, 23 February.





Years of Philippines - Japan Friendship
日本・フィリピン友好年
1956 - 2026

Tapestry of harmony and hope

THREADS THAT BIND: ON JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES' ENDURING FRIENDSHIP



Message from His Excellency ENDO Kazuya
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of the Philippines

From postwar reconciliation to a comprehensive partnership for peace and prosperity, the Philippines-Japan relationship is a tapestry woven from diplomacy, development, security, and, above all, human connection.

Today, Japan commemorates the 69th birthday of His Imperial Majesty Naohito. On this auspicious occasion, I am pleased to share in this celebration with our Filipino friends and the Japanese community in the Philippines. This year also marks a momentous milestone: the 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship, celebrated under the theme "Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities."

The symbolic anniversary logo, designed by Mr. Edmon Fuares, a young artist from Baguio, beautifully combines Japan's shimenawa rope with the Filipino abaca fiber. It reflects how our two nations have steadily woven beautiful threads of trust, partnership and shared hope over seven decades.

Looking back to seven decades of trust
Since Japan made its solemn pledge to peace and embarked on its postwar path as a peaceful nation, many predecessors on both sides made

numerous contributions for these long-term efforts. A hopeful thread in our shared history can be found in President Elpidio Quirino's pardon of Japanese prisoners in 1953. In 1956, the Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement was signed—marking a foundational moment in our bilateral relationship.

The Imperial Family's visits have helped in deepening our bonds. The then His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko paid their maiden visit to the Philippines in 1962, even meeting General Emilio Aguinaldo. 54 years later, in 2016, His Majesty the Emperor Akihito and Her Majesty the Empress Michiko returned to the Philippines for their historic visit for the 60th Anniversary of our friendship—reaffirming the strong foundation of our heightened ties.

In the last seven decades, there have been countless exchanges at various levels, each of which helped lead to our shared mutual understanding. Past forward to the present, Prime Minister Takaichi Sanse's first

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE SPIRIT
THE then His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko with General Emilio Aguinaldo at the Balcony of the National Independence Shrine in Cavite.



Years of Philippines - Japan Friendship
日本・フィリピン友好年
1956 - 2026



MANILA TO HANEDA ROUND TRIP BUSINESS CLASS



ONGOING construction of the Metro Manila Subway Project at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

FOREIGN Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu inspects the progress of the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project in January 2025.

EMPOWERING BARMM fisherfolk through the project 'Development of a Sustainable Fishery Value Chain in the BARMM' with the Food and Agriculture Organization.

Japan remains committed to advancing peace through dialogue and translating peace into tangible dividends through development. Japan-Philippines business collaborations continue to flourish. In 2025, Japan was the second largest trading partner and the largest investor for the Philippines. Around 1,000 Japanese companies are operating their businesses in the country.

Advancing peace and security through cooperation

Our security cooperation has likewise evolved in ways that contribute to peace and stability, in line with the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). The Japan-Philippines Regional Access Agreement (RAA), which entered into force in 2023, has facilitated joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises, demonstrating how interoperability can translate into tangible support for disaster response and resilience-building.

The Official Security Assistance (OSA) program is another important pillar of our cooperation, aimed at enhancing resilience by strengthening the Philippines' defense capabilities through the provision of essential equipment and capacity building. Notably, the Philippines is Japan's only partner to have received OSA for three consecutive years. Just this 11 February, I attended a hardware ceremony for five coastal surveillance radar systems, as part of the first OSA project, with Department of National Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr.

Japan and the Philippines work closely in multilateral fora to promote peace and prosperity in the region and beyond. We take pride in our long-standing partnership in advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, guided by our shared aspiration for "a world free of nuclear weapons."

We are also working hand in hand to address global challenges such as

Turn to page A8

face-to-face meeting with a foreign leader after her inauguration was with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in October 2023. In January 2024, Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu visited the Philippines as part of his first bilateral overseas tour.

These developments underscore the high priority that Japan places on the Philippines as a close neighbor and trusted strategic partner that shares fundamental values and principles.

Fortifying ties as partners in progress

Our economic partnership is another important thread in this tapestry of friendship. Since the 1960s, Japan has supported the Philippines through Official Development Assistance (ODA), contributing to progress vital areas such as disaster risk reduction and infrastructure development. This commitment continues today through landmark projects including the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMS), the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), the Davao City Bypass and the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project.

On the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's (BARMM) path toward peace, development and self-reliance, Japan has stood steadily alongside the region.

FOREIGN Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu offers flowers at Rizal Park during his visit in January 2026.



70th Anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship



Harmony of friendship A Jazz Prelude to 70 Years of Japan-Philippines Ties, the opening event for the 70th Philippines-Japan Friendship Anniversary

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PHILIPPINE
Ambassador Felino Neri and Japanese State Minister TAKASAKI Tatsunosuke at the signing of Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement, 9 May 1956



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
PRIME Minister TAKAICHI Sanse with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in Malaysia.



47th ASEAN Summit AND RELATED SUMMITS
26-29 OCTOBER 2025, KUALA LUMPUR



ON JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES' ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

From page A3

climate change through initiatives like the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), and to advance development cooperation through frameworks such as the Conference on cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD). As the Philippines assumes its important and responsible role as ASEAN Chair this year, Japan will spare no effort in extending its cooperation.

Binding our ties through cultural exchange

Beyond policies and programs, the most enduring strands of our friendship are woven by people – through educational exchanges, cultural interaction, academic cooperation and everyday friendships.

In 2025, 73 Filipino scholars were supported under the MEXT Scholarship Program, and Japan welcomed its first participant from the Philippines in the Young Leaders Program in the field of Healthcare Administration. That same year, 67 young Filipinos embarked on enriching experiences under the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme.

The Osaka Expo 2025 also offered meaningful platforms for people-to-people exchange. Building on this proud legacy, the Philippine Pavilion at the 2025 Expo was awarded the prestigious Silver Award for outstanding design. We once again extend our heartfelt appreciation to the creative Filipino minds behind the pavilion for their contribution to the success of this global event.

Travel, too, has served as a reliable bridge between our cultures. I am delighted to note that Japan welcomed more than 880,000 Filipino visitors in 2025 alone – an encouraging testament to the growing closeness between our peoples.

Weaving the future together

All these illustrate how the Japan-Philippines relationship has been shaped over time by many threads of cooperation and friendship. The work of weaving, however, does not end here. As we look ahead this 2026, I hope we can reflect on our future together and identify “new threads” to our growing partnership.

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As we embark on a year of commemorative events for our 70th anniversary, we warmly invite our Filipino friends and partners to join us in the celebrations, as we continue weaving our future together – toward peace, prosperity and possibilities for generations to come.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PHILIPPINE Pavilion at the Expo 2025 featuring 200 handwoven textiles representing the Philippines' 18 regions.

From Winter to Spring...

JNTO
Japan National Tourism Organization

Come visit Japan.

SHIROYAMA Historical Park, Yamaguchi, Japan.

AINOKURA Village, Toyama, Japan.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF JAPAN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION



Photo courtesy of the Imperial Household Agency of Japan

THREADS THAT BIND:

On Japan and the Philippines' enduring friendship

BY KAZUYA ENDO,
JAPANESE
AMBASSADOR
TO THE PHILIPPINES

TODAY, Japan commemorates the 60th birthday of His Imperial Majesty Naruhito. On this auspicious occasion, I am pleased to share this celebration with our Filipino friends and the Japanese community in the Philippines.

This year also marks a momentous milestone: the 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship, celebrated under the theme "Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities."

The symbolic anniversary logo, designed by Edmundo Ruerte, a young artist from Baguio, beautifully combines Japan's shimenawa rope with the Filipino abaca fiber. It reflects how our two nations have steadily woven beautiful threads of trust, partnership and shared hope over seven decades.

Looking back to seven decades of trust

Since Japan made its solemn pledge to peace and embarked on its postwar path as a peaceful nation, many predecessors on both sides made numerous contributions for these long-term efforts.

A hopeful thread in our shared history can be found in late president Elpidio Quirino's pardon of Japanese prisoners in 1953. In 1956, the Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement was signed, marking a foundational moment in our bilateral relationship.

The Imperial Family's visits have helped in deepening our bonds. The then-His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko paid their maiden visit to the Philippines in 1962, even meeting Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo. Fifty-four years later, in 2016, His Majesty the Emperor Akihito and Her Majesty the Empress Michiko returned to the Philippines for their historic visit for the 60th anniversary of our friendship, reaffirming the strong foundation of our

heightened ties.

In the last seven decades, there have been countless exchanges at various levels, each of which helped lead to our shared mutual understanding. Fast forward to the present, Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae's first face-to-face meeting with a foreign leader after her inauguration was with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in October 2025.

In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu visited the Philippines as part of his first bilateral overseas tour. These developments underscore the high priority that Japan places on the Philippines as a close neighbor and trusted strategic partner who shares fundamental values and principles.

Fortifying ties as partners in progress

Our economic partnership is another important thread in this tapestry of friendship. Since the 1960s, Japan has supported the Philippines through Official Development Assistance or ODA, contributing to progress in vital areas such as disaster risk reduction and infrastructure development.

This commitment continues today through landmark projects including the Metro Manila Subway Project or MMSB, the North-South Commuter Railway or NSCR, the Davao City Bypass and the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project.

On the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's path toward peace, development and self-reliance, Japan has stood steadily alongside the region. Japan remains committed to advancing peace through dialogue and translating peace into tangible dividends through development.

Japan-Philippines business collaborations continue to flourish. In 2025, Japan was the second largest trading partner and the largest investor for the Philippines. Around 1,600 Japanese companies are operating their businesses in the country.



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

Advancing peace and security through cooperation

Our security cooperation has likewise evolved in ways that contribute to peace and stability, in line with the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, or FOIP.

The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement or RAA, which entered into force in 2025, has facilitated joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises, demonstrating how interoperability can translate into tangible support for disaster response and resilience-building.

The Official Security Assistance (OSA) program is another important pillar of our cooperation, aimed at enhancing resilience by strengthening the Philippines' defense capabilities through the provision of essential equipment and capacity-building.

Notably, the Philippines is Japan's only partner to have received OSA for three consecutive years. Just this February 11, I attended a handover ceremony for five coastal surveillance radar systems, as part of the first OSA project, with Department of National Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr.

Japan and the Philippines work closely in multilateral fora to promote peace and prosperity in the region and beyond. We take pride in our long-standing partnership in advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, guided by our shared aspiration for "a world free of nuclear weapons."

We are also working hand in hand to address global chal-



Years of Philippines - Japan Friendship 1956 - 2026

lenges such as climate change through initiatives such as the Asia Zero Emission Community, and to advance development cooperation through frameworks such as the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian Development.

As the Philippines assumes its important and responsible role as Asean Chair this year, Japan will spare no effort in extending its cooperation.

Binding our ties through cultural exchange

Beyond policies and programs, the most enduring strands of our friendship are woven by people through educational exchanges, cultural interaction, academic cooperation and everyday friendships.

In 2025, 73 Filipino scholars were supported under the MEXT Scholarship Program, and Japan welcomed its first participant from the Philippines in the Young Leaders Program in the field of health care administration. That same year, 67 young Filipinos embarked on enriching experiences under the Japan Exchange and Teaching or JET Programme.

The Osaka Expo 2025 also offered meaningful platforms for people-to-people exchange. Building on this proud legacy, the Philippine Pavilion at the 2025 Expo was awarded the prestigious Silver



His Majesty the Emperor PHOTO FROM THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AGENCY OF JAPAN

Award for outstanding design. We, once again, extend our heartfelt appreciation to the creative Filipino minds behind the pavilion for their contribution to the success of this global event.

Travel, too, has served as a reliable bridge between our cultures. I am delighted to note that Japan welcomed more than 600,000 Filipino visitors in 2025 alone — an encouraging testament to the growing closeness between our peoples.

Weaving the future together

All these illustrate how the Japan-Philippines relationship

has been shaped over time by many threads of cooperation and friendship. The work of weaving, however, does not end here. As we look ahead to 2026, I hope we can reflect on our future together and identify "new threads" to our growing partnership.

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mation, space and broader economic security.

From postwar reconciliation to a comprehensive partnership for peace and prosperity, the Philippines-Japan relationship is a tapestry woven from diplomacy, development, security and, above all, human connection.

As we embark on a year of commemorative events for our 70th anniversary, we warmly invite our Filipino friends and partners to join us in the celebrations, as we continue weaving our future together toward peace, prosperity and possibilities for generations to come.

Jimny gets smarter and safer: Iconic 4x4 now equipped with Suzuki Safety Support

ADVENTURE has just reached a whole new level. Suzuki Philippines proudly announces that the 2026 Jimny 3-Door now comes equipped with Suzuki Safety Support, bringing advanced driver-assist technology to one of the most iconic and capable 4x4 vehicles in its class.

Long celebrated for its unmistakable boxy design, compact agility and genuine off-road toughness, the Jimny 3-Door now adds intelligent safety to its list of strengths. This latest upgrade makes the beloved 4x4 not just trail-ready but even more reassuring for everyday drives and long highway journeys.

At the heart of this update is Suzuki Safety Support, a suite of preventive safety technologies, designed to help avoid collisions and reduce driver fatigue.

The system includes Dual Sensor Brake Support II (DSBS II), which uses a camera and laser sensor to detect vehicles or pedestrians ahead. When a potential collision is detected, the system issues audio and visual warnings and can automatically apply the brakes if necessary.

However, it is important to note that DSBS II is limited to the ability of the monocular camera and millimeter-wave radar sensor to detect obstacles and lanes. Please do not rely on this system alone, and always practice safe driving habits.

Available in all new Jimny 3-Door variants, Adaptive Cruise Control uses radar and a camera to maintain a

preset speed while intelligently adjusting acceleration and braking, based on traffic conditions ahead.

Further enhancing confidence behind the wheel, Lane Departure Prevention provides subtle steering assistance when the vehicle begins drifting outside its lane while Lane Departure Warning alerts the driver through audiovisual cues and steering feedback.

The Wearing Alert function monitors driving patterns and issues a buzzer-like sound and dashboard warning if unusual drifting is detected.

Meanwhile, High Beam Assist improves nighttime visibility by automatically switching between high and low beams, depending on surrounding traffic and lighting conditions, activating at speeds of 30 kilometers per hour and above when the headlamp switch is set to auto.

Beyond safety, the Jimny 3-Door also receives practical interior and convenience enhancements. GLX variants now feature a new nine-inch infotainment touchscreen that delivers a more modern and intuitive user experience, complemented by a newly updated colored display in the information gauge cluster that replaces the previous red-orange graphics.

Both GL and GLX variants now benefit from the addition of front side airbags and curtain airbags, strengthening occupant protection in the event of a collision. Front parking sensors are now standard across

the range, making maneuvering in tight spaces easier while the GL variant also gains a reverse camera for added convenience and visibility when backing up.

Under the hood, the Jimny retains its proven 1.5-liter gasoline engine, producing 102 PS and 130 Nm of torque, paired with either a five-speed manual or a four-speed automatic transmission.

Its legendary 4x4 Allgrip Pro drivetrain continues to deliver authentic off-road capability, allowing drivers to switch between 2-wheel drive (2WD) mode for smooth and fuel-efficient paved driving, 4WD High for added traction on gravel or dirt roads, and 4WD Low for maximum torque when conquering sand, mud or steep rocky terrain.

With the integration of Suzuki Safety Support and meaningful comfort upgrades, the 2026 Jimny 3-Door evolves into an even more well-rounded adventure companion — one that blends heritage, capability and modern intelligence in a compact yet highly capable package.

The 2026 Jimny 3-Door with Suzuki Safety Support is available in the following variants: the GL MT SS at P1,293,000, the GLX AT SS at P1,355,000 and the GLX AT Two-Tone SS at P1,365,000.

For more information, check out any authorized Suzuki Auto dealerships nationwide or visit <http://suzuki.com.ph/autof>.



THREADS THAT BIND: ON JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES' ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

BY JAPANESE AMBASSADOR
ENDO KAZUYA

Today, Japan commemorates the 66th birthday of His Imperial Majesty Naruhito. On this auspicious occasion, I am pleased to share in this celebration with our Filipino friends and the Japanese community in the Philippines.

This year also marks a momentous milestone: the 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship, celebrated under the theme "Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities." The symbolic anniversary logo, designed by Mr. Edmon Fuerte, a young artist from Baguio, beautifully combines Japan's shimenawa rope with the Filipino abaca fiber. It reflects how our two nations have steadily woven beautiful threads of trust, partnership, and shared hope over seven decades.

Looking back to seven decades of trust

Since Japan made its solemn pledge to peace and embarked on its postwar path as a peaceful nation, many predecessors on both sides made numerous contributions for these long-term efforts. A hopeful thread in our shared history can be found in President Elpidio Quirino's pardon of Japanese prisoners in 1953. In 1956, the Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement was signed — marking a foundational moment in our bilateral relationship.

The Imperial Family's visits have helped in deepening our bonds. Then His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko paid their maiden visit to the Philippines in 1962, even meeting General Emilio Aguinaldo. 54 years later, in 2016, His Majesty the Emperor Akihito and Her Majesty the Empress Michiko returned to the Philippines for their historic visit for the 60th Anniversary of our friendship — reaffirming the strong foundation of our heightened ties.

In the last seven decades, there have been countless exchanges at various levels, each of which helped lead to our shared mutual understanding.

Past forward to the present, Prime Minister Takachi Sanae's first face-to-face meeting with a foreign leader after her inauguration was with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in October 2025. In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu visited the Philippines as part of his first bilateral overseas tour. These developments underscore the high priority that Japan places on the Philippines as a close neighbor and trusted strategic partner who shares fundamental values and principles.



Years of Philippines - Japan Friendship
日本-フィリピン友好年
1956 - 2026

The 70th Philippines-Japan Friendship Logo designed by Mr. Edmon Fuerte, inspired by Japan's shimenawa rope and the Philippines' abaca fiber

Fortifying ties as partners in progress

Our economic partnership is another important thread in this tapestry of friendship. Since the 1960s, Japan has supported the Philippines through Official Development Assistance (ODA), contributing to progress in vital areas such as disaster risk reduction and infrastructure development. This commitment continues today through landmark projects including the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP), the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), the Davao City Bypass, and the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project.

On the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's (BARMM) path toward peace, development, and self-reliance, Japan has stood steadily alongside the region. Japan remains committed to advancing peace through dialogue and translating peace into tangible dividends through development.

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Our security cooperation has likewise evolved in ways that contribute to peace and stability, in line with the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), which entered into force in 2025, has facilitated joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises, demonstrating how



Unveiling of the Memorial Monument for late President Elpidio Quirino, who granted amnesty to Japanese prisoners of war (POW) in the Philippines in 1953



Unveiling of the Memorial Monument for late President Elpidio Quirino, who granted amnesty to Japanese prisoners of war (POW) in the Philippines in 1953

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Binding our ties through cultural exchange

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The Osaka Expo 2025 also offered meaningful platforms for people-to-people exchange. Building on this proud legacy, the Philippine Pavilion at the 2025

Threads that bind: On Japan and the Philippines' enduring friendship

In the spirit of His Imperial Majesty Naruhito's 66th birthday and the landmark 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship — under the evocative theme "Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities" — Japanese Ambassador ENDO Kazuya invites us to trace the enduring threads binding our nations. From President Quirino's gracious pardon in 1953 and the 1956 Reparations Agreement to today's transformative infrastructure like the Metro Manila Subway, robust security pacts such as the Reciprocal Access Agreement, and vibrant people-to-people exchanges at the Osaka Expo 2025, our partnership has evolved into a vibrant tapestry of diplomacy, development, and human connection. As we look ahead, new strands in space, digital, and green innovation promise even brighter horizons for peace and prosperity. | NL

Message from Japanese Ambassador ENDO Kazuya

Expo was awarded the prestigious Silver Award for outstanding design. We once again extend our heartfelt appreciation to the creative Filipino minds behind the pavilion for their contribution to the success of this global event.

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From postwar reconciliation to a comprehensive partnership for peace and prosperity, the Philippines-Japan relationship is a tapestry woven from diplomacy, development, security, and, above all, human connection. As we embark on a year of commemorative events for our 70th anniversary, we warmly invite our Filipino friends and partners to join us in the celebrations, as we continue weaving our future together — toward peace, prosperity, and possibilities for generations to come.



Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines
Kazuya ENDO



His Majesty the Emperor © Imperial Household Agency of Japan



Philippine Ambassador Felino Neri and Japanese State Minister TAKASAKI Tatsunosuke at the signing of Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement, 9 May 1956 ©Manila Bulletin



Then His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko with General Emilio Aguinaldo at the balcony of the National Independence Shrine in Cavite ©National Independence Shrine



Prime Minister TAKACHI Sanae with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in Malaysia © Cabinet Public Affairs Office



Ongoing construction of the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City

Threads that bind: On Japan and the Philippines' enduring friendship

By **Kazuya Endo**

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines



Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines **Kazuya Endo**

TODAY, JAPAN commemorates the 66th birthday of His Imperial Majesty Naruhito. On this auspicious occasion, I am pleased to share this celebration with our Filipino friends and the Japanese community in the Philippines.

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LOOKING BACK TO SEVEN DECADES OF TRUST

Since Japan made its solemn pledge to peace and embarked on its postwar path as a peaceful nation, many predecessors on both sides made numerous contributions for these long-term efforts. A hopeful thread in our shared history can be found in President Elpidio Quirino's pardon of Japanese prisoners in 1953. In 1956, the Japan-Philippines Reparations Agreement was signed — marking a foundational moment in our bilateral relationship.

The Imperial Family's visits have helped in deepening our bonds. Then His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko paid their maiden visit to the Philippines in 1962, even meeting General Emilio Aguinaldo. 54 years later, in 2016, His Majesty the Emperor Akihito and Her Majesty the Empress Michiko returned to the Philippines for their historic visit for the 60th Anniversary of our friendship — reaffirming the strong foundation of our heightened ties.

In the last seven decades, there have been countless exchanges at various levels, each of which helped lead to our shared mutual understanding. Fast forward to the present, Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae's first face-to-face meeting with a foreign leader after her inauguration was with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in October 2025. In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu visited the Philippines as part of his first bilateral overseas tour. These developments underscore the high priority that Japan places on the Philippines as a close neighbor

and trusted strategic partner who shares fundamental values and principles.

FORTIFYING TIES AS PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Our economic partnership is another important thread in this tapestry of friendship. Since the 1960s, Japan has supported the Philippines through Official Development Assistance (ODA), contributing to progress in vital areas such as disaster risk reduction and infrastructure development. This commitment continues today through landmark projects including the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMS), the North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), the Davao City Bypass, and the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project.

On the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's (BARMM) path toward peace, development, and self-reliance, Japan has stood steadily alongside the region. Japan remains committed to advancing peace through dialogue and translating peace into tangible dividends through development. Japan-Philippines business collaborations continue to flourish. In 2025, Japan was the second largest trading partner and the largest investor for the Philippines. Around 1,600 Japanese companies are operating their businesses in the country.

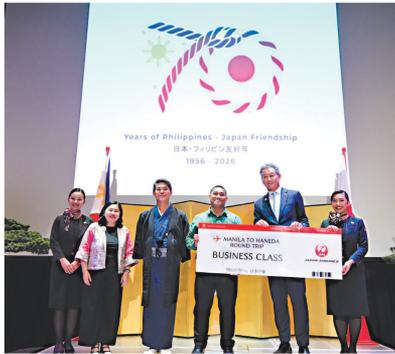
ADVANCING PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGH COOPERATION

Our security cooperation has likewise evolved in ways that contribute to peace and stability, in line with the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), which entered into force in 2025, has facilitated joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises, demonstrating how interoperability can translate into tangible support for disaster response and resilience-building.

The Official Security Assistance (OSA) program is another important pillar of our



Years of Philippines - Japan Friendship
日本・フィリピン友好年
1956 - 2026



The 70th Philippines-Japan Friendship Logo designed by Edmon Fuerte, inspired by Japan's shimenawa rope and the Philippines' abaca fiber.



Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae with President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. during the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in Malaysia

cooperation, aimed at enhancing resilience by strengthening the Philippines' defense capabilities through the provision of essential equipment and capacity-building. Notably, the Philippines is Japan's only partner to have received OSA for three consecutive years. Just this Feb. 11, I attended a handover ceremony for five coastal surveillance radar systems, as part of the first OSA project, with Department of National Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr.

Japan and the Philippines work closely in multilateral fora to promote peace and prosperity in the region and beyond. We take pride in our long-standing partnership in advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, guided by our shared aspiration for "a world free of nuclear weapons." We are also working hand in hand to address global challenges such as climate change through initiatives like the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), and to advance development cooperation through frameworks such as the Conference on cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian

Development (CEAPAD). As the Philippines assumes its important and responsible role as ASEAN Chair this year, Japan will spare no effort in extending its cooperation.

BINDING OUR TIES THROUGH CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Beyond policies and programs, the most enduring strands of our friendship are woven by people — through educational exchanges, cultural interaction, academic cooperation, and everyday friendships. In 2025, 73 Filipino scholars were supported under the MEXT Scholarship Program, and Japan welcomed its first participant from the Philippines in the Young Leaders Program in the field of Healthcare Administration. That same year, 67 young Filipinos embarked on enriching experiences under the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme.

The Osaka Expo 2025 also offered meaningful platforms for people-to-people exchange. Building on this proud legacy, the Philippine Pavilion at the 2025 Expo was awarded the prestigious Silver Award for outstanding de-



His Majesty the Emperor



Handover ceremony of the five coastal radar systems to the Philippines under Japan's Official Security Assistance (OSA) FY 2023



Since their entry into the Philippine market in February 2025, Japanese strawberries have attracted attention for their vibrant appearance and high quality

sign. We once again extend our heartfelt appreciation to the creative Filipino minds behind the pavilion for their contribution to the success of this global event.

Travel, too, has served as a reliable bridge between our cultures. I am delighted to note that Japan welcomed more than 880,000 Filipino visitors in 2025 alone — an encouraging testament to the growing closeness between our peoples.

WEAVING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

All these illustrate how the Japan-Philippines relationship has been shaped over time by many threads of cooperation and friendship. The work of weaving, however, does not end here. As we look ahead this 2026, I hope we can reflect on our future together and identify "new threads" to our growing partnership.

One such thread, in my view,

lies in economic cooperation. For decades, Japan has been the leading development partner of the Philippines across a wide range of fields. As our economic ties continue to deepen, we hope to expand our cooperation into new frontiers, including digital and green transformation, space, and broader economic security.

From postwar reconciliation to a comprehensive partnership for peace and prosperity, the Philippines-Japan relationship is a tapestry woven from diplomacy, development, security, and, above all, human connection. As we embark on a year of commemorative events for our 70th anniversary, we warmly invite our Filipino friends and partners to join us in the celebrations, as we continue weaving our future together — toward peace, prosperity, and possibilities for generations to come.



Visit of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. in the Metro Manila Subway Project with DoTR Secretary Vince B. Dizon



Mr. Hiroshi Sagawa, Chief Representative of JIBC Manila Office at BCDA & JIBC Project Pitching Event



Nihongo Partners at Gen. Ricardo G. Papa Sr. Memorial High School



The Japan Pavilion, together with Japanese suppliers, at the Travel Tour Expo 2026 held at SMX