



Left: Prime Minister Kishida attended the 26th ASEAN-Japan Summit on September 6, 2023. The summit was held in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, which currently chairs ASEAN. Top Right: Securing a sustainable and stable power supply is vital for regional economic development. The photo shows the Nam Ngum 1 Hydropower Station in Laos, expanded with Japan's help. Bottom Right: Japan is helping to develop human resources in a wide range of fields, supporting those who will take the lead in nation-building in ASEAN countries. The photo shows participants in a program that invites people to Japan to learn how to combat marine plastic waste. GUJIN CO., LTD.

A GOLDEN FRIENDSHIP, GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES: THE FUTURE OF JAPAN AND ASEAN

The year 2023 is the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. During that past half century, the global situation has changed significantly, with Japan-ASEAN relations entering a new phase. This milestone year is an opportunity to reflect on the past 50 years and set out the vision for the new era.



The official logo for the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. A logo by a Japanese creator and the catchphrase "Golden Friendship, Golden Opportunities" by a Filipino creator were selected for the contest, which was open to all nationals of ASEAN Member States and Japan.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 for the purpose of regional peace and economic growth. The number of member states has gradually risen from the original five—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore—to the 10-country system we see today.

In the meantime, ASEAN has strengthened its intra-regional integration in the fields of politics and security, the economy, and society and culture, including the signing of the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement and the ASEAN Charter.

Japan and ASEAN have built and strengthened friendly and



Mrs. KISHIDA Yuko, the spouse of the prime minister, attending the official ASEAN Summit Spouse Program together with the other first ladies. They watched a skit performed by children, as well as traditional Indonesian dances and a workshop on the country's traditional arts and crafts, experiencing the diversity of each area of Indonesia.

cooperative relations in various fields since first engaging in a dialogue on synthetic rubber in 1973. Through people-to-people exchanges, Japan and ASEAN have established the "heart-to-heart" mutual trust and confidence advocated in the Fukuda Doctrine in 1977, working together as partners for peace and stability, as well as for development and prosperity in the region. In particular, Japan's assistance to ASEAN, which emphasizes the development of human resources and the creation of organizations, has greatly contributed to the nation-building and growth of the group's member states.

The year 2023 is the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. Prior to that, an expert panel from academic and business communities established in Japan presented three pillars for building a new Japan-ASEAN partnership in their report to the government, namely: (1) shaping a regional order which is free, open, rules-based, and fair; (2) building a society which fulfills economic prosperity, sustainability, and equity; and, (3) mutual understanding and trust as the platform for a renewed

ASEAN-Japan partnership.

Over the past half century, ASEAN countries have achieved remarkable economic growth, and Japan has newly proposed pillars that emphasize fairness.

"What Japan should emphasize in its work with ASEAN is the setting of rules and standards in line with fairness, while facing common challenges that reflect the regional realities especially in the areas of human development, energy and digital technology," said Associate Professor AIZAWA Nobuhiro of Kyushu University, a researcher on Southeast Asia and member of the expert panel. "We need to understand that the relationship between Japan and ASEAN is precious. We have 50 years of friendship; we are blessed with a broad and dense network. But at the same time, we need to transform and renew this relationship very quickly as challenges are pressing. Japan will actively engage with new emerging social forces in ASEAN, especially with those from the younger generation. The trust we have is a major advantage for working together in times of unpredictable global changes."

In March, Prime Minister Kishida announced a new plan

for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" and clearly identified Southeast Asia as an important region. He also announced a new contribution of 100 million dollars to the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). In addition, at the ASEAN-Indo-Pacific Forum held in September, the prime minister announced the Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative, under which Japan indicated that it intends to expand the scope of cooperation to strengthen connectivity in a wide range of fields, including transport infrastructure development, digital connectivity, maritime cooperation, supply chain resilience, electricity connectivity, and human and knowledge connectivity.

Concluding the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit will be held for three days, from December 16 through 18, 2023. It is hoped that Japan and ASEAN will further strengthen their friendly and cooperative relationship.

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