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JAPAN'S

National Foundation Day



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Japan and Cambodia grow

**H.E. UENO ATSUSHI,
THE AMBASSADOR OF
JAPAN TO CAMBODIA**

I AM delighted to be able to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan with the people of Cambodia.

It has been a little over a year since I arrived in Phnom Penh as Ambassador, and I have been warmly welcomed by Cambodian people wherever I go and whoever I meet. During my year here, I have realized how friendly Cambodia is to Japan.

This year began with two tragic events in Japan – the Noto Peninsula Earthquake and the plane crash at Haneda Airport. In both cases, however, the Japanese people were greatly encouraged by the heartfelt condolences and warm words of sympathy from many Cambodian people. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude.

Firstly, let us look back on 2023, when we marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Cambodia, a significant milestone in the history of our relationship. During the 70th anniversary year, we successfully hosted more than 70 events in Cambodia alone.

I am convinced that these events, which were held seamlessly throughout the year and attended by a large number of people, have deepened the mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of our two countries and have brought the relationship between Japan and Cambodia closer than ever.

Our bilateral relationship was upgraded to a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership” last year, and the vibrant exchanges and interactions that took place throughout the year have confirmed our belief in this new partnership.

Last year was also a major turning point for Cambodia, with the appointment of the first new Prime Minister for 38 years and the establishment of the new Cabinet led by Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Prime Minister HUN Manet.

The Government of Japan has paid close attention to the “Pentagonal Strategy Phase 1” that was launched by the new Cabinet shortly after Samdech Thipadei’s inauguration, as well as the



Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan. IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AGENCY OF JAPAN

new Cabinet’s efforts to put in place numerous reforms.

Last December, Samdech Thipadei Prime Minister made the first visit to Japan as Prime Minister when he attended the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative

Summit that was held to mark the 50th year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.

Throughout his stay in Japan, Samdech Thipadei Prime Minister maintained a busy schedule, which was similar to one in Cambodia. I believe that many of you have witnessed, through the media, the efforts of Sam-



H.E. Ueno Atsushi, the Ambassador of Japan to Cambodia. SUPPLIED

dech Thipadei Prime Minister taking the lead to attract investment from Japan to Cambodia.

Indeed, this visit to Japan has resulted in significant achievements in the further advancement of Japan-Cambodia relations, and this has greatly encouraged me.

During the summit meeting between Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio and Samdech Thipadei HUN Manet on December 18, both leaders confirmed their plans for collaboration in areas such as digitalization, energy, and enhancing connectivity.

The Japanese government has confirmed its support, through Official Development Assistance (ODA), for the establishment of the National Data Center, which will play a pivotal role in realizing Cambodia’s digital government. The signing of the Exchange of Notes for this project, in the presence of both leaders, demonstrated the direction for the future cooperation between our two countries.

In addition, we have reached agreements on numerous collaboration projects involving the Japanese private sector and the Cambodian government, and this demonstrates well the advancement of cooperation in terms of both the quantity and scope.

We, at the Embassy of Japan, will make every effort to ensure that many more cooperation projects come to fruition in 2024.

The international community is currently testing our determination to maintain a free and open international order based on the rule of law in many ways.

Besides this, the challenges that both Japan and Cambodia face in the international community are becoming increasingly diverse and complex.

This is due to a number of factors, such as the development of a digital society and the need for us to respond to global issues such as climate change and the threats posed by infectious diseases.

I believe that it is in addressing these issues that the true value of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership will be tested. My understanding is that “comprehensive strategic partnership” means Japan and Cambodia working as partners, hand in hand, to address not only bilateral issues, but also regional and international challenges.

A good example of this is the joint training of Ukrainian demining personnel carried out by Japan and Cambodia in January and July of last year.

We would like to encourage more of this kind of cooperation in the future.

Japan intends to promote cooperation in areas such as digital technology and connectivity enhancement, which are currently becoming prioritized agenda for Cambodia, the wider region and the international community as a whole.

By doing so, I believe that Japan and Cambodia can strengthen our partnership in a way that promotes further, mutually beneficial, development and addresses the challenges of the region and the international community. We can do this as partners bound by strong bonds of trust.

At the same time, we will continue to support Cambodia in achieving sustainable development through ODA.

For example, in the digital sector, the leaders of our two countries agreed on “the List of items of Co-Creation for Common Agenda Initiative in the digital area for Cambodia” at the summit meeting last December. This is the first case of cooperation as a “Co-Creation for Common Agenda Initiative”, which was launched in Japan’s Development Cooperation Charter revised in June last year.

It is a new type of cooperation in a sense that the Japanese government tries its best to work together with its counterparts to find and propose solution models for emerging issues.

This year, we will accelerate discussions with the Cambodian government to realize more specific projects on the basis of this type of cooperation.

Furthermore, we recognize that human resource development is one of the top priorities for the Cambodian government, so we will also continue our support in this regard.

In terms of the political and security sectors, Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels are currently docked at the Port of Sihanoukville and a goodwill exercise with the Royal Cambodian Navy, which is stationed at Ream Naval Base, is scheduled.

We are pleased to see that exchanges between our naval forces are developing alongside the exchanges between our two land forces, which have been successfully taking place for a long time.

In addition, the first round of the Japan-Cambodia Defense Senior Officials’ Dialogue, which was agreed upon at the summit meeting in December last year, is scheduled to be held in Cambodia next week.

Japan also continues to support Cambodia’s democratic development. From this perspective, the Government of Japan



The Japan-Cambodia Summit Meeting in Tokyo last December. CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE, GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN



The 2023 Japan-Cambodia Kizuna Festival took place at the CJCC from February 24-26. SUPPLIED



growing closer than ever



The Angkor Wat Western Causeway Construction Completion Ceremony. SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

conducted, for the sixth time, an invitation program for the young people of Cambodia who are involved in politics.

It ran from January 31 to February 7, 2024 and representatives from nine political parties, including both the ruling and opposition parties, participated.

This program provided an opportunity for the participants to observe how the democratic system works in Japan and learn

how to interact with those who belong to different political parties. We will continue to support the development of an environment where diverse opinions are respected in Cambodia.

People-to-people exchanges and trust will provide the foundations for a good bilateral relationship in the future. We hope that two-way exchanges between Japan and Cambodia will be further accelerated through

tourism, academic initiatives, and employment.

The Government of Japan will encourage people who are interested in staying in Japan to do so through scholarships and various exchange programs.

In the context of cultural exchanges, I would like to mention that the Japan-Cambodia Kizuna Festival is held being at CJCC right now and will continue until February 25.

I hope that many of you will go and enjoy the cultural exchanges and experiences that are taking place there.

Through the initiatives I have already mentioned, we can expect to see development in the bilateral relationship across many fields, but this cannot be achieved by our governments alone. It will also require the involvement of a broad cross section of people.

We will take advantage of the momentum created by the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations last year to strengthen the exchanges between our two countries at various levels and across various fields. I, therefore, ask for the continued understanding and support of the Cambodian people in strengthening our relationship.

This year is the Year of the

Dragon, and it is said that the Year of the Dragon brings visible changes.

With this in mind, we would, during this Year of Dragon, like to achieve significant and visible developments in Japan-Cambodia relations, which are already bound firmly by trust and friendship.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a healthy and happy year ahead. ●

CELEBRATING

Japan's

NATIONAL DAY



From the
Management and staff of

The Phnom Penh Post





Teachers have a significant impact on the learning and lives of their students. SUPPLIED



Four-year Teacher Education Colleges (TECs) produce outstanding teachers. SUPPLIED

Future bright for teachers as change-makers in Cambodia's socioeconomic development

THE Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) firmly believes that with teachers having a significant impact on the quality of students' learning and their lives, they are important change-makers in the socioeconomic development of Cambodia.

Teacher training in the Kingdom has undergone a number of important reforms over the decades, with the newly established four-year Teacher Education Colleges (TECs) – which have produced outstanding teachers at primary and lower-secondary schools – a key development.

The modern teacher training system in Cambodia began with irregular short-term training programmes to cope with an overwhelming shortage of teachers after the 1980s during the conflict reconstruction period.

With the training system gradually developing, two-year teacher training centres for primary and secondary schools were established in 1997 as regular teacher training institutions.

Overcoming tremendous hurdles at that time, such as insufficient infrastructure and resources, teachers have made great efforts and contributed admirably to re-establishing the Cambodian education system, which, serving as the foundation of the country, has resulted in impressive economic growth over the decades.

As the Kingdom has developed, teacher quality has become even more important to improving students' learning outcomes, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has upgraded the teaching qualification by establishing four-year Teacher Education Colleges (TECs) for primary and lower-secondary teachers.

In response to a request from MoEYS, JICA cooperated in establishing the first two four-year TECs, in Phnom Penh and Battambang.

This included the



The Ministry of Education has upgraded teaching by establishing four-year TECs. SUPPLIED

construction of buildings and the nurturing of teacher trainers, as well as the development of curriculums, syllabuses and teaching materials.

This has led to outstanding improvements in teacher training and the upgrading of qualifications for teachers in Cambodia.

TECs have already produced

some 1,000 graduates, and new primary and lower-secondary teachers with bachelor's degrees have begun work in schools.

By expanding TECs in

Cambodia, the importance of the teachers who have graduated from the four-year TECs has been widely recognised, with MoEYS in principle setting a policy

direction that teacher education will be steadily reformed from two years of training to four.

"Human Capital Development" is one of the priorities outlined in the Pentagonal Strategy Phase 1 of the Royal Government of Cambodia, with teachers playing a pivotal role in enhancing the capacity of students, who will create the future of the country.

JICA, as an implementing agency of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA), is to continue working with the Cambodian government, people and other development partners to contribute to the improvement of teacher education – with teachers ensuring the future of Cambodia will be bright. ●



Phnom Penh Teacher Education College students. SUPPLIED



JTI, championing Japanese values in Cambodia

On Japan National Day, JTI International (Cambodia) Co., Ltd (“JTI Cambodia”) stands out as a prime example of Japanese corporate excellence in the Kingdom. As a member of Japan’s prestigious JT Group of Companies, JTI Cambodia has garnered recognition for its ethical business practices and significant economic contributions.

Acknowledged with Gold Tax Compliance for 2022 and 2023 by the Cambodian government and hailed as one of Largest Taxpayers in 2022 by then Prime Minister Hun Sen, JTI Cambodia sets high standards in tax compliance and makes a significant contribution to the Kingdom’s fiscal policy.

JTI Cambodia’s strong commitment to employee wellbeing is also an evident through four consecutive certifications as a Top Employer in the Kingdom – offering competitive benefits and progressive initiatives, like the New Ways of Working (NWOW) model that accommodates workplace flexibility. Gender equality and family support are reflected in its progressive global family leave policy that provides five months of parental leave with full base salary for all employees of all genders.

Beyond business, JTI Cambodia engages in meaningful CSR initiatives focusing on environmental conservation, diversity, equity & inclusion, and community resilience.

From reducing its global carbon footprint to implementing

local projects like mangrove reforestation in Kampot province, JTI demonstrates a commitment to environmental sustainability. Under 2023 “Community Light-Up” project, the Company installed 1,200 solar streetlights on local public roads in Kampong Cham, Ratanakiri, Prey Veng, Koh Kong, Kampong Speu, and Battambang.

Collaborating with non-profit organizations, JTI drives projects to enhance community resilience and sustainable development, exemplifying Japanese values of integrity and social responsibility. The Company partnered with Wildlife Alliance to install 8 solar water pumps in protected areas of Cardamom Mountain, Koh Kong, and collaborated with Planet Water Foundation to install 4 aqua towers in Kampong Cham, Preah Sihanouk, and Siem Reap, benefiting more than 31,000 people in these locations.

On this Japan National Day celebration, JTI Cambodia reaffirms its devotion to contributing to Cambodia’s socio-economic progress while upholding Japanese principles of integrity and mutual prosperity.

For more information about JTI Cambodia and its initiatives, visit www.jti.com and www.facebook.com/JTICambodia



TOYOTA

Marking 71 years of Cambodia and Japan’s close friendship and strong ties





PHOTOS SUPPLIED

Kizuna Festival 2024 continuing to deepen Japan and Cambodia's cultural connections

SERVING up a rich assortment of exciting cultural events, the 13th Japan-Cambodia Kizuna Festival at the Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Center (CJCC) is being held from February 22-25, 2024.

With events covering traditional Japanese costumes, origami and calligraphy, Japanese and Khmer martial arts, language and literature, food, music, arts and crafts, and even cosplay, this year's Kizuna Festival is crammed full with something for everyone.

The opening ceremony for one of the biggest Japan-Cambodia cultural festivals – organised by the Embassy of Japan in collaboration with the CJCC and the Japan Foundation, Phnom Penh Liaison Office – was held on Thursday, February 22, from 6pm to 7:30pm.

The theme of this year's festival is "Memories for Our New Chapters", which, organisers say, emphasises the activities to be celebrated together for now and those to be kept for the future.

"Kizuna" – the Japanese word for "strong bond" – was chosen as the name of the first festival at the CJCC back in 2012 to symbolise the strong relationship between Japan and Cambodia, and their people, with it since being held annually.

Having performed at Thursday evening's opening ceremony, Miyu Shimomura is set to again wow the Kizuna Festival with her "Cambodia-Japan Traditional Dance" Special Performance on Friday, February 23.



A Japanese performer of Nihon-bu traditional dance and an Urushi lacquer artist, Miyu Shimomura also performed at an event in Tokyo to celebrate last year's 70th anniversary of the friendship between Cambodia and Japan.

Mealai Khmer Arts Studio, who specialise in designing traditional Khmer diadems and bijouxeries, have designed jewellery for many major national events.

And on Saturday, February 24,

they will exhibit diadems, piastra and bijouxeries featuring the great heroes and heroines of Cambodia's famed Angkorian era.

Vanthan Ly is the multitasking Cambodian singer, songwriter, record producer and instrumentalist known professionally as Vanthan.

A true Cambodian musical virtuoso, the unique talent – who is able to play 28 instruments – is set to captivate with a special performance at the Cambodia-Japan Acoustic

Concert on Sunday, February 25.

Vanthan began playing music in 2001, learning to master all of Cambodia's classical instruments, before going to France in 2009 to continue his musical career by studying production, music theory and more.

Other highlights include the Cambodia-Japan Traditional Dance Special Performance on Friday, February 23, as well as the "Illustration on Old Khmer Scripts: Inscribing and

Ink Rubbing" event, and a Senbazuru origami workshop.

Saturday, February 24, sees the Worldship Orchestra join the Angkor Youth Orchestra Association, while Dr Sorn Vannak presents a seminar on "The Importance of Reading for Writing Literature Review".

Sunday, February 25, offers the "Exploring Japanese Calligraphy: Mastering the Art of Using the Brush" class, while Sou Khmerin holds a seminar on "Appearances in Literature". There will also be Japanese language and origami classes, "Let's try Japanese and Khmer Martial Arts", and "Let's Cosplay Kizuna 2024."

There are traditional Japanese costume events on every day of the of the Kizuna Festival 2024, while Sensei Ito holds the "Let's Try Writing Japanese Calligraphy" workshop on the Friday and Saturday.

The Japan-Cambodia Kizuna Festival is an annual event organised since 2012 to present the cultures of Japan and Cambodia, and to promote further exchanges between the people of both countries.

Intended as a hub for people to meet and exchange ideas and information, the organisers hope that through these cultural events, participants can feel closer to Japan, and deepen their understanding of Japanese and Cambodian cultures.

And now in its 13th edition, and going from strength to strength in attracting more and more visitors and contributors every year, the Kizuna Festival continues to do just that. ●





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Dai-ichi Life Insurance (Cambodia) PLC. ("Dai-ichi Life Cambodia"), a leading Japanese life insurer, is dedicated to growing the life insurance industry in Cambodia through its individual insurance agents' schemes. It is still on the path to hiring up to 300 full-time insurance agents across Cambodia under a unique scheme called **Kiwami Dai-ichi Master Program**. This new job scheme offers selected candidates a guaranteed fixed allowance, an opportunity to earn over **40 million riels in the first 6 months** and supported by an intensive Japanese quality training program. Five recruitment batches have been launched since September 2023 across Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey.

Recognizing the importance of the different segment needs to job opportunities, a new full time **Sales Director Program** that offers selected candidates guaranteed fixed monthly salary, various allowances and high-income potential have also been recently launched. This program is ideal for candidates who are small business owners or have proven experience with good network of customers and potential recruits.



The latest launch of a part time individual agency program called **TAKUMI Dai-ichi Specialized Program** allows selected candidates to earn a monthly allowance and receive Japanese quality life insurance training at no additional fee. This program is suitable for candidates that are unable to commit full time but wish to establish new sources of incomes through providing quality life insurance advice to Cambodians.

Mr. Mah Kin Yoong, Acting CEO of Dai-ichi Life Cambodia, said: "Having established our presence in Cambodia for almost 5 years now, we are committed in supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia's vision to increase insurance awareness and penetration in Cambodia. We firmly believe in continuously investing to enhance the quality of insurance agents to serve customers professionally and contribute to the sustainability of the life insurance industry in Cambodia."

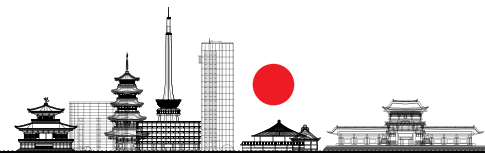
These programs are led by a team of highly experienced and dedicated Dai-ichi Life insurance professionals that have recruited, trained, and developed more than 5,000 insurance agents over their career life span. GM, Distribution Operations, Yoshiyuki Inanobe noted: "As a leading life insurer from Japan with over 121 years of experience, our DNA is in the quality and professionalism of our life insurance agents that are currently serving more than 15 million policies in Japan today. We are confident the team in Cambodia is equipped with the right tools and expertise to develop a core group of highly trained insurance agents to provide quality financial advice and protection."



Happy National Day of Japan

From Dai-ichi Life Insurance (Cambodia) PLC.





H.E. Ueno Atsushi, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Cambodia, poses for a photo with representatives of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre after the signing of a grant contract on February 15, 2024. SUPPLIED

Japan providing \$828,546 for mine clearing, new school building and enhanced agriculture operations

THE JAPANESE government is providing \$828,546 in total for three recipient organisations under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects framework, known as the “KUSANONE” programme.

Grant contracts were signed by H.E. Ueno Atsushi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Cambodia, and representatives of the three recipient organisations on February 15, 2024.

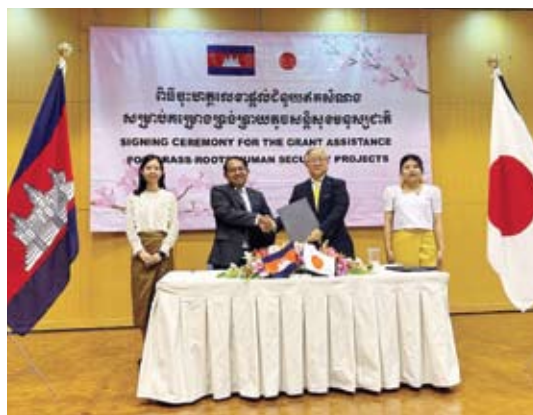
The funding is to be used to carry out three projects benefiting the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), Battambang province's Ping Pong Primary School and Ratanakkiri cashew nut farmers.

With the \$515,060 “Project for Mine Clearance in Three Northwestern Provinces of Cambodia”, the grant to CMAC will be used to accelerate mine clearance and improve efficiency by installing the software for an AI-based mine action system.

Unexploded ordnance continues to be found in Cambodia, including when developing areas of land for agriculture or tourism, or



Japanese Ambassador H.E. Ueno Atsushi signs grant contracts with representatives of the three recipient organisations on February 15, 2024. SUPPLIED



the establishment of large-scale factories, with increased economic activities having unearthed landmines in Pursat, Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces.

The “Project for Mine Clearance in Three Northwestern Provinces of Cambodia” aims to bring about a safe environment for social development and around 20,000 residents of the three provinces by eliminating explosive remnants of war across a total of 0.96 square kilometres of land.

The Battambang Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport received

\$88,900 for the “Project for Construction of Ping Pong Primary School Building in Borvel District, Battambang Province”.

In this project, a five-room school building equipped with modern classroom furniture will be built at the Ping Pong Primary School in Battambang province's Borvel district.

Currently, students at the school face difficulties when studying because the current wooden school building and the furniture therein are in poor condition.

The project aims to bring about a safer and more comfortable learning

environment, with it expected to benefit around 166 students through the improvements made to the quality of education.

The Ratanakkiri Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries received \$224,586 to assist four agricultural cooperatives in the east of Cambodia.

In “The Project for the Improvement of Post-harvest Operation of Cashew Nuts in Ratanakkiri Province”, the grant will be used to construct warehouses and drying yards, and equip the cooperatives with moisture testers and grading machines.

Harvested raw cashew nuts are currently being sold at low prices during the plentiful harvest season because of a lack of warehousing and drying yards, with cashew farmers struggling to maintain high standards of quality in the production process without moisture testers and grading machines.

It is expected to benefit around 200 farmers in four agricultural districts by strengthening the value chain in cashew nut production as well as improving farmers' incomes.

Japan's “KUSANONE” projects started in Cambodia

in 1991 in order to support Cambodia's reconstruction and development at the grassroots level.

The assistance aims to protect those who are vulnerable due to various factors such as poverty and/or misfortune that directly threaten their lives, livelihoods and dignity, as well as to promote the self-reliance of local communities.

Since 1991, the Japanese government has provided more than \$69 million, mainly to local authorities and non-governmental organisations, to implement 691 KUSANONE projects across Cambodia. ●

