



A special feature produced by

Synergy Media Specialists

Indonesia





www.synergymediaspecialists.com

60 years on, Japan-Indonesia strategic partnership grows stronger

Since Japan and Indonesia established bilateral relations in 1958, much has been achieved. Trust, investment and a spirit of partnership have enabled the relationship to grow beyond economic and political ties and encompass friendship and social responsibility.

Over the last decade, Japan has become one of Indonesia's top export destinations. 2016 saw Japanese foreign direct investment to Indonesia increase by almost 90 percent. Today, there are over 1,800 Japanese companies in Indonesia and new joint ventures and partnerships are being established across a range of industries.

"Recently, we passed the \$1 trillion economy mark, our stock index hit a record high and our credit rating has improved dramatically," said Sony Harsono, a member of the Republic of Indonesia's National Committee for the Economy and Industry.

"The Japanese have invested heavily in Indonesia and their contribution to the country includes port developments, megapower plants and public transport projects. Our economic partnership agreement continues to fuel business between our two countries," he explained.

"Last year, Japanese investment in Indonesia totaled \$5 billion U.S. dollars," said Masafumi Ishii, Japan's ambassador to Indonesia. "Japanese companies have created close to 5 million jobs and more than 90 percent of these have gone to Indonesians. 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product and 20 percent of its exports are created by



Cutting-edge Japanese tunnel construction technology is applied to the MRT project. The operation of the TBMs (Senayan and Setiabudi) is implemented by 100 Indonesian engineers with assistance from five Japanese engineers. JICA not only contributes to the construction itself, but also offers technical transfers to Indonesia through the MRT project.



Masafumi Ishii, Ambassador of Japan to Indonesia

building infrastructure to create economic growth.

In November, JICA signed key loan agreements with the government of Indonesia to support the development of Patimban Port. By presidential decree, the development has been declared a national strategic project to strengthen the international port logistics capacity of the Jakarta metropolitan area.

Japan's support for the improvement of connectivity across Indonesia and internationally began in the 1970s. Japan has contributed to 20 percent of the toll road construction around greater Jakarta and the development of five airports, including Bali, Surabaya and Palembang.

JICA is currently cooperating with the Ministry of Transportation and other key stakeholders to construct a mass rapid transit (MRT) system in Jakarta.

Technical exchange and co-operation between Japan and Indonesia is also notable. Japan has welcomed approximately 4,400 trainees from Indonesia over the last 60 years, while Japan has sent over 4,000 technical experts to Indonesia.

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on several occasions and the two have committed to continuing cooperation on key projects.

"In this milestone anniversary year, we are launching Project 2045," said Ishii. "We intend to project how Indonesia will have developed by 2045, the country's 100th year since independence and identify areas for future Japan-Indonesia cooperation. We expect infrastructure and vocational training to play key roles, in addition to new areas such as e-commerce, addressing the challenges of an aging society, environmental protection and urbanization solutions. To mark our 60-year anniversary, we want to acknowledge our achievements and build on our close friendship to benefit future generations."



www.jica.go.jp/english
jic.or.id/aboutjic-en/
kein.go.id
www.id.emb-japan.go.jp/

Panorama JTB Tours: Partners in Culture Exchange

The 60th anniversary of Japan-Indonesia relations is a great time to encourage cultural exchange between our two countries," said Hiroaki Izumi, senior director of corporate strategy at the premier travel and leisure company, Panorama JTB Tours. "While we are dedicated to delivering travel services, a central part of our company's DNA lies in our ability to provide our customers with meaningful cultural exchanges."

Headquartered in Tokyo, JTB is one of Japan's leading travel companies with 520 offices in 101 cities spanning 37 countries.

In order to achieve the

company's Global Vision 2020 plan of becoming the No. 1 travel agency in Asia, JTB has opened up new branches and established joint ventures across the region.

Last year, JTB partnered with Indonesia's leading integrated tourism and hospitality company, Panorama JTB Tours, to form the joint venture company Panorama JTB Tours. The merger is part of JTB's global strategy to become the best travel services company in Asia.

JTB benefits from Panorama Group's strong sales network, with 53 branches in 24 cities across Indonesia, serving both leisure and corporate travels. Through



Hiroaki Izumi, Senior Director of Corporate Strategy of Panorama JTB



Relax... You're with Us! Your HOLIDAY SPECIALIST

OUR SERVICES: • Flight Reservation & Ticketing Service
• Hotel Vouchers • Travel Insurance • Travel Document Service
• Airport Meet & Greet Services • Transportation Services
• Leisure Group Tour • Individual Travel Packages • Cruise
• Corporate Incentive • Concert & Admission Tickets

Panorama JTB

HEAD OFFICE (021) 2556 5151 (021) 5723 031

www.panorama-jtb.com

the strength of JTB's international network, Panorama JTB Tours expects to see strong business growth toward 2020.

Panorama JTB aims to become a leading regional tourism company and the pride of Indonesia's tourism industry.

The company's network continues to expand through franchises across Indonesia. Panorama JTB Tours has three branded business lines — Retail and Leisure Management, Corporate Travel Management and Corporate Incentive Management under the brand name, Orange.

Also under Panorama JTB Tours' operations are Panorama World, TurEz, Go Holidays, Smart Holidays, Wupi and Travelicious. In addition to that, Panorama JTB Tours also has joint ventures with USA-headquartered Carlson Wagonlit Travel and Singapore-based Chan Brothers Travel.

Previously, the company's top two destinations for free independent travelers (those who are not part of a tour group, but stay at various accommodations booked by an agent or guide) and package tour clients were Europe, Korea and other growing destinations in demand. Today, Japan is the No. 1 destination. Last year, Indonesian visitor numbers to Japan grew by 30 percent.

In line with the Indonesian government's target to attract 20 million tourists by 2019, Panorama JTB Tours set its own growth target to 300 percent over the next five years, with the support of digital technology and the additional distribution channels both online and offline.

Panorama JTB Tours is a staunch supporter of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Indonesia. "We facilitate exchanges of culture and look forward to contributing to this important anniversary between our two countries," Izumi said.

Panorama JTB

www.jtbcorp.jp/en

Yakult's Healthy Growth in Indonesia

Yakult's founder, Minoru Shirota, believed in preventive medicine and that a healthy gut leads to a long life. Guided by their founder's principles and a passion to contribute to the health and happiness of people around the world, PT Yakult Indonesia Persada educates millions of Indonesians on the benefits of having good intestinal health.

"Our bodies absorb nutrition from the small intestines. It is important that we take care of them by having more good bacteria to keep ourselves healthy," explained Sanae Ueno, president director of PT Yakult Indonesia Persada. "Each bottle of Yakult has 6.5 billion *Lactobacillus casei* Shirota bacteria that help the body, so

it is recommended that we drink it daily.

"Every day, our factories receive more than 200 visitors to learn more about Yakult. Not so many factories are open to visitors. While in our factories, you can see the entire process of production," Ueno added.

The company began manufacturing in Indonesia to serve the domestic market in 1991, but only a few years later it faced challenging times during the Asian financial crisis. Yakult Honsha Co., Ltd. made a strategic move to pursue operations in Indonesia and bought out all the shares of its Indonesian arm to make it a wholly owned subsidiary.

Recovery took some time but the

company experienced a turning point in 2007 when it began to focus on further developing the iconic "Yakult Lady" to communicate directly and educate consumers.

There are currently 8,440 "Yakult Ladies" delivering fresh Yakult to homes across Indonesia every day. They are the company's backbone, outperforming sales generated from retailers in 2017 with a contribution of over 50 percent.

"Every noon across all our offices, the Yakult ladies meet for 45 minutes to talk about various issues like how to improve the market conditions or how to best respond to customer queries and address their concerns," shared Antonius Nababan, the company's marketing communication and commercial director.

Among all the Yakult branches around the world, PT Yakult Indonesia Persada has the highest sales by volume. Their coverage allows them to reach 200 million potential consumers, yet only 2.6 percent, or over 5 million, consume Yakult daily. Ueno is confident that the number of daily consumers will increase.

"If our growth continues at this rate, sometime in the future we will have to consider expanding again. But more than our own growth, it is the health of the Indonesian people that is more important to us," said Ueno.

www.yakult.co.id



Sanae Ueno, President Director; Antonius Nababan, Marketing Communication and Commercial Director of Yakult Indonesia

Woven Into the Fabric of Economic Growth

Indonesia is one of the world's major textile and garment producers. Exerting its leadership position in the industry, the country's largest exporter of woven apparel, Busana Apparel Group, produces 50 million pieces annually, covering formal, casual and activewear for many of the world's leading fashion brands.

Established in 1975 with a vision to become a leading integrated solutions provider in the world of lifestyle and fashion, today, the company has nine world-class production locations, 30 factories and two laundry facilities across Indonesia and Ethiopia. Export markets include North America, Europe, Australia, South America, Japan and other Asian countries.

With a focus on international quality standards, innovation, on-time delivery and customer satisfaction, Busana retains its leading position and ability to compete on the global stage. The company's most recently built factory, designed to be more energy efficient, is in line for a LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Powered by the skilled hands of over



Busana Apparel Group employs over 28,800 people and has become a one-stop integrated apparel manufacturer and provider for international retail brands.

28,000 employees (90 percent of whom are women), the company has become a one-stop, integrated apparel manufacturer and provider for many brands, including PVH, Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Eileen Fisher, J.Jill, Ann Taylor, Uniqlo, GU, Spyder, Lululemon, Ralph Lauren, Hugo Boss, Perry Ellis, DKNY and Wrangler.

"We aspire to be our customers' preferred supplier and are constantly working in partnership with our clients to better understand their needs and produce new collections each season," said Chairman and CEO M. Maniwanen.

Over the last decade, growth of the company has been fueled by its focus on product quality and superior customer service. Fast Retailing Co., Ltd., the company behind the ubiquitous Japanese retail brand Uniqlo, is one of Busana's valued clients.

Indonesia's trade agreement with Japan continues to attract many Japanese brands and brings the two countries closer together in terms of trade.

"Today, 15 percent of our business comes from Japan and we are looking for opportunities to grow with our partners in this important market,"

said Maniwanen. "We are further expanding our product categories to include workwear and uniforms."

In line with Indonesia's target of increasing the value of exported textiles and garments to \$75 billion by 2030, Busana continues to invest in technology, innovation and training.

"Our people are our strength," said Maniwanen. "We always strive to attract, develop and empower our labor force."

The company has also expanded its production facilities beyond Indonesian shores. Last year, Busana established factory operations in Ethiopia to supply North American customers. These factories, when completed, will have a capacity of over 400,000 pieces per month and will employ over 2,500 Ethiopian nationals.

"We intend to forge even more long-term partnerships," said Maniwanen. "We are currently exploring opportunities to manufacture and grow our business in Southeast Asia, and we are ready to take up new challenges, build up partnerships and expand our business."

www.busanagroup.com
www.eratextco.com



M. Maniwanen, Chairman and CEO of Busana Apparel Group

APPJ – Embracing partnerships, innovation and efficiency

Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) is the largest business unit of Indonesia's Sinar Mas. As one of the world's leading producers of pulp, paper and packaging, APP exports to over 150 countries and is one of Indonesia's truly global companies.

APP has had a presence in Japan for over a quarter of a century. In 1997, through a joint venture with Itochu Corp., APP Japan Ltd. (APPJ) was established.

With approximately 20 percent market share, APP's photocopy paper is a market leader in Japan. Given Japan's stringent requirements and the dominance of domestic Japanese pulp and paper producers in the market, this is quite a feat.

"By producing high-quality and price-competitive products tailored to the Japanese market while ensuring on-time delivery, we have overcome the challenges and succeeded



Tan Ui Sian, chairman of APP Japan Ltd. (APPJ)

in Japan," explained Tan Ui Sian, chairman of APP Japan.

APP launched its Sustainability Roadmap Vision 2020 in 2012 and implemented their Forest Conser-

vation Policy the following year, completely eliminating all natural forest-derived products from the supply chain. These initiatives improved Japanese consumer confidence in APP's commitment to developing a sustainable forest-based industry.

Today, APP Japan is a member of the United Nations Environmental Program and is a regular participant of Japan's largest eco-product exhibition, Ecopro.

APP Japan is the first and currently the only Indonesian member of Keidanren, or, the Japanese Business Federation's highly respected economic organization.

In line with this milestone year, Arifin Tasrif, Indonesia's ambassador to Japan, established the Business Association of Indonesia in Japan with Tan as the association's first chairman.

www.asiapulpandpaper.com

A special feature produced by:

Synergy Media Specialists

KIIC: The Choice of Industry Leaders

Driven by the domestic demand of the world's fourth-largest population, Indonesia's economy continues to thrive and attract foreign investment.

Over 25 years ago, Japan's Itochu Corp. and Sinar Mas Group, Indonesia's leading conglomerate, formed a partnership to develop and manage the Karawang International Industrial City (KIIC). Today, the city is dedicated to providing infrastructure and environmental solutions to leading companies in Indonesia.

Committed to international standards of quality, environmental protection and industrial health and safety, KIIC is the first industrial park in Indonesia to obtain ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 18001 certifications.

The city's infrastructure includes well-maintained roads, a priority power arrangement delivering a stable supply of electricity, engineer-approved control systems and 24-hour security surveillance.

Of the 160 tenants, 80 percent are Japanese companies, including Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Yamaha Indonesia Motor Manufacturing, Astra Daihatsu Motor and Sharp Semiconductor Indonesia.

"In the last five years, we have begun to see more investments from the consumer goods and food sectors," said President Director Hisashi Akita. Indeed, Procter & Gamble, Uni-Charm,



KIIC's Japanese-led executive team: A. Takami, Acting Director of Marketing & Tenant Relations; Hisashi Akita, President Director; Haga Kota, Director

Kao Corp. and Ajinomoto Co. are just some of the notable companies located in KIIC.

With a strong community led by KIIC's management and a proactive tenant-led association, KIIC tenants transcend industrial links and collaborate regularly to improve productivity and contribute to society.

"There are many Japanese businesses and families already moving closer to our area," said Akita. "Ongoing infrastructure projects are improving connectivity and driving economic growth in the surrounding area," said Akita.

Developments include Patimban Deep Sea Port, Jakarta-Cikampek Elevated Toll Road, West Java Kertajati International

Airport and the Jakarta Bandung High Speed Railway.

Just 56 kilometers from the center of Jakarta, KIIC also boasts a golf course, sports center, extended stay hotel, shops, restaurants, banks, clinics, petrol stations and other facilities to support their customers' businesses.

Already in its fourth phase of expansion since 1993, KIIC has developed an additional 160 hectares of land to meet the growing demand for industrial space. As more international businesses establish operations in and around the city, KIIC is looking to expand its footprint and continue to deliver solutions to international businesses. ♦

www.kiic.co.id

BCA: Always on the side of growth

With strong management, high-quality products and services, as well as strategic expansion plans, Bank Central Asia (BCA) continues to support the growing Indonesian economy.

"The sheer size and diversity of the Indonesian market creates opportunities for both foreign and domestic investors," said Deputy President Director Eugene Galbraith. "Government policy is becoming increasingly supportive of foreign investment. What is good for the economy is good for us."

BCA is a leading commercial bank in Indonesia with a core focus on transaction banking and providing loan facilities and solutions to the corporate, commercial small and medium-sized enterprises and consumer segments. The bank's solid financial performance has proven to be consistent and sustainable over the years. Its 2017 consolidated financial results report a 13.1 percent increase in net profit from 20.6 trillion to 23.3 trillion rupiah.

BCA's success can be attributed to the management team's efforts to increase and diversify the bank's assets while focusing on excellence in transactional banking and a strong risk management culture.



Eugene Galbraith, Deputy President Director of Bank Central Asia (BCA)

"Our highly diversified loan portfolio has enabled us to capitalize on our significant low-cost funding advantage. In addition, today, we have become the dominant mortgage bank in the country," explained Galbraith.

BCA has a track record as one of Indonesia's most innovative banks through early adoption and application of technologies. It has given the company an edge when responding to customer needs. Located inside popular shopping malls, myBCA provides one-stop,

self-service digital banking, ranging from opening savings accounts to credit cards and housing or vehicle financing applications. Sakuku, an electronic wallet equivalent, enables card-less withdrawals and its Split Bill feature even allows friends to easily split restaurant bills.

BCA's motto, "Always by Your Side," reflects the importance the bank places on customer-centric services and long-term relationships. Over the years, BCA has nurtured its relationships with Japanese banks and investors.

"The Japanese industry has provided key support to Indonesian industries and infrastructure projects," said Galbraith. "There is a wealth of opportunities here and Japanese corporates are very well-positioned to grow their businesses while contributing to the development of the Indonesian economy. BCA is looking forward to supporting their efforts as we continue our work with our Japanese friends." ♦



www.bca.co.id/en

Delivering products and solutions to help customers achieve their goals

Established in 2000 as PT Ekasurya Inout Indonesia, a partnership between Chugai Shoko Co., Ltd. of Japan and Inout Enterprises Pte. Ltd. of Singapore, the Ekasurya Group has become a trusted partner for international companies doing business in Indonesia.

Initially founded as a trading company to capitalize on Indonesia's booming electronics industry, Ekasurya has diversified and expanded its capabilities. Today, the group is a principal distributor for globally recognized brands, offering over 4,000 industrial and commercial products and solutions.

"We are a one-stop shop for our customers," explained Ekasurya's director Martin Candra. "We are in constant communication with our partners and ensure our clients' requirements are met with the best products and solutions available to the market."

The company has ISO 9001 and 14001 for Quality and Environmental Management System, and Candra continues to expand Ekasurya's network across the country.

In Indonesia, Ekasurya is the authorized distributor of Kimberly-Clark Professional, Lotcite, Siemens and a number of Japanese brands, including Ichimura, DNP



Ekasurya's head office located in the industrial town of Bekasi

and Midori. The company also offers CleanEra, a microfabric cleaning product and Japanese-designed industrial face masks.

"Our policy is to remain true to our principals and offer the best products to the market," said Candra.

By building a professional and competitive team, partnering with global industry leaders and delivering on-time solutions, Ekasurya has built a loyal Japanese customer base.

More than 80 percent of the company's customers are Japa-

nese companies in Indonesia, specifically in the automotive, electronics and food industries.

"Every brand we represent has technical experts to support our Japanese customers," Candra shared. "The manner in which we conduct our business is based on well-recognized Japanese best practices. As we continue to focus on the growth of our business, manufacturing and 'horeca' (hotel-restaurant-cafe) will generate growth opportunities for us." ♦

www.ekasurya.co.id

Yokogawa: Agents of Technology and Innovation

Since its establishment in 1994, PT Yokogawa Indonesia has proudly contributed to Indonesian society through technology transfer and co-innovation in the areas of engineering, measurement, control and automation.

"Yokogawa's strength in Indonesia is the reliable local support we provide to our users," said Sudarto Ramli, technical director of Yokogawa Indonesia. "The oil and gas industries are our main contributors. Major projects from these sectors have provided perfect battlegrounds for local capability development over the last 24 years."

Yokogawa is one of the leading automation providers in the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry. In Indonesia, Yokogawa's business has grown since 2016 as a result of its involvement as an automation system supplier to the LNG industry.

Yokogawa Indonesia was chosen as a host for the Yokogawa Users Conference for Asia Pacific that was held in Bandung in February. The event brought together industrial experts from across the region to discuss solutions, introduce new innovations and share the best practices



Yokogawa Indonesia's leadership team: Sudarto Ramli, Director Technical Unit; Tulus Sadono, Sales and Marketing Director; Fatmadian Darman, Director of Corporate Planning and Administration; Rei Asao, President Director

designed to enhance plant processes and operations.

In his opening speech, Takashi Nishijima, president and CEO of Yokogawa Electric Corp., announced the company's new Synaptic Business Automation concept. Nishijima reaffirmed the company's commitment to developing the latest information technologies to help its customers transform and optimize their businesses.

"We treat our customers like

partners and gain their trust by understanding their needs and training their people," said Rei Asao, president director of PT Yokogawa Indonesia. "When customers better understand our capability and advice on how we can support their needs, they'll be able to create sustainable systems for better production," said Ramli.

In 2015, Indonesia's Ministry of Public Works and Housing signed a memorandum of understanding with Yokogawa

Indonesia Convention Exhibition (ICE): Venue of Choice

Synergy Media Specialists recently sat down with representatives of Indonesia Convention Exhibition (ICE) to discuss their position in Indonesia's industry, their relations with Japan and the company's future plans.

Why is ICE recognized as Indonesia's preeminent destination for exhibitions?

ICE is one of the largest exhibition and convention centers in Southeast Asia.

ICE has a footprint of 220,000 square meters, with 10 exhibition halls of 5,000 square meters per hall, 33 meeting rooms and a luxury convention hall.

Operated by Deutsche Messe Venue Operations, one of the largest trade fair companies, ICE adapts their international standards of service and operation management.

How would you characterize Indonesia's MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) industry?

The MICE industry in Indonesia is still growing fast year by year. This can be seen by the



Aage Hansen, General Manager of Indonesia Convention Exhibition and Director of Deutsche Messe Venue Operations



ICE has been hailed the best exhibition and convention center in Indonesia.

high demand of new events that are coming to ICE and our competitors. The economy's growth is also another factor that has pushed businesses to hold MICE in many venues around Indonesia.

The constant economic growth of 5 percent is an opportunity for the MICE industry to gain and gather all the growth in the economy, and convert it to more MICE projects in the future.

ICE hosted many of the big-scale events from various segments, such as business-to-business and business-to-customer exhibitions, family

shows, high-level government event, graduations and weddings.

Are there any events targeting the Japanese community?

There used to be the Indonesia Japan Expo to promote further engagement and close partnerships with Japanese businesses in Indonesia and introduce Japanese culture to Indonesians.

We would like to see another one just like this to be held at ICE, especially since the Bumi Serpong Damai (BSD) area and Jakarta as a whole have a high

concentration of Japanese expatriates and companies.

What is ICE prioritizing over the next few years?

Our top priorities are to expand the market overseas and to make our brand well known on the international platform. ICE has also prioritized digitalization as the main promotion strategy for the future.

We have many returning events, as well as upcoming new local and international large-scale events to look forward to. ♦

ice-indonesia.com

Blue Bird Group – Driving Growth

Blue Bird has been Indonesia's market leader and most trusted brand for passenger transport for over 40 years. Known for their consistent quality of service and safety, Blue Bird taxis, limousines, rental cars and buses can be seen traversing the country every day, serving the transportation needs of the country's growing population.

"The No. 1 core value embedded in our company is integrity," explained Noni Purnomo, president director of Blue Bird Group Holding and president of Intelligent Transport Systems Indonesia. "The way we control, encourage and incentivize our employees is based on integrity, and we strongly believe that sustainable success is based on hard work and discipline rather than overnight successes."

Purnomo's enterprising late grandmother started the family business in the 1960s by commercializing private cars and introducing the first (and for a long time) the only limousine service for Jakarta's five-star hotels.

Built on Indonesian family values, the company has



Our focus is to forge strategic long-term partnerships with companies that have the expertise to grow our businesses and contribute to society."

NONI PURNOMO
President Director of Blue Bird Group
Holding and President of Intelligent Transport Systems Indonesia

grown from owning, operating and maintaining two cars to a fleet of close to 30,000. It has also diversified into property, trading and logistics — businesses Purnomo plans to grow through strategic partnerships.

"We are attuned to the Indonesian business environment and understand its regulations, challenges and opportunities," said Purnomo.

"We are very strong in project management and human resources. Our focus is to forge strategic long-term partnerships with companies that have the expertise to grow our businesses and contribute to soci-

ety."

Over the years, Blue Bird has acquired a land bank with properties in strategic locations in major cities across Indonesia, including a beautiful beachfront hotel in Lombok. While much of the land is currently being used for taxi pooling and car maintenance, the company intends to add value to these assets by developing them.

Through its purchase of safe, efficient and durable vehicles, Blue Bird Group enjoys strong ties with Japanese automotive companies in Indonesia. The company has further strengthened its relations with Japanese

businesses in Indonesia by delivering trade and logistics solutions.

Blue Bird Group aspires to form more partnerships such as its joint venture with Sumitomo Warehouse Co., Ltd. The joint venture covers freight forwarding services in Indonesia.

"We intend to significantly grow our company in the next few years. Particularly our properties and our cold chain logistics businesses, which we hope to scale up with the help of Japanese partners," said Purnomo.

"For Indonesians and Japanese, trust is a vital quality when it comes to doing business and as we deepen our relationship with one another, we look forward to cementing the already strong ties between our two countries." ♦

