

Japan Focus



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Japan, Australia, India, U.S. Leaders Urge Free and Open Indo-Pacific Region

On March 12, the leaders of Japan, Australia, India and the US held a video conference, and reaffirmed their commitment to quadrilateral

cooperation between their countries. They urged a free and open Indo Pacific region and noted that they "strive for a region that is free, open, inclusive, healthy, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion." Read the leaders' joint statement [HERE](#). The four leaders also contributed an [opinion piece in the Washington Post](#) stating their commitment to a free, open and secure Indo Pacific region.

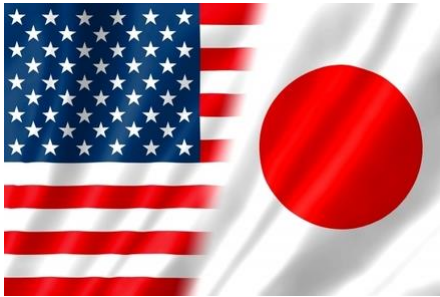


Japan, US Foreign & Defense Ministers Reaffirm US-Japan Alliance

US Secretary of State Blinken, US Secretary of Defense Austin, Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs Motegi, and Minister of

Defense Kishi met on March 16 in Tokyo for the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee (2+2). They reaffirmed that the U.S.-Japan Alliance remains the cornerstone

of peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Japan resolved to enhance its capabilities to bolster national defense and further strengthen the Alliance. The two US officials also made a [courtesy visit to Prime Minister Suga](#).



Joint Japan-US Message on 10 Year Anniversary of Great East Japan Earthquake

This March 11 marked 10 years since the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster struck the Tohoku region of Japan. At the time, Japan's Self-Defense Forces and U.S. Forces immediately sprang into action, joining together to perform search-and-rescue operations and to provide supplies and transportation to those in need. Prime Minister SUGA Yoshihide and US President Joe Biden issued a joint statement this March 11 noting, "In support of these individuals and to honor who we lost, Japan and the United States will continue to move forward shoulder-to-shoulder as "tomodachi" (friends) to finish the reconstruction of the Tōhoku region and to realize a better future for us all."

Prime Minister Suga is scheduled to visit the US in April to meet with President Biden, making him the first leader from overseas to meet him in person since Biden's inauguration in January.



Prime Minister Suga Visits Fukushima To Highlight Reconstruction Efforts

On March 6, Prime Minister Suga visited areas in Fukushima that have been redeveloped and rebuilt since the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake disaster. He visited the

Fukushima Hydrogen Energy Research Field, a hydrogen production facility in the town of Namie that is part of Japan's plans to become carbon neutral by 2050. On March 11, Prime Minister Suga attended a memorial ceremony in Tokyo [to mark the 10th anniversary of the earthquake disaster](#). Learn more about how reconstruction efforts in the Tohoku region have progressed [HERE](#).



Latest on Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games

On March 25, [the highly-anticipated Olympic torch relay](#) began from the J-Village National Training Center in Fukushima Prefecture and will complete its journey on July 23, the day of the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. The Olympic Torch Relay will be held across all 47 prefectures of Japan, passing through some 857 local municipalities. Watch a live stream of the Torch Relay [HERE](#). Due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, foreign spectators will not be able to enter Japan for the Tokyo 2020 Games, according to an [announcement on March 20](#). Meanwhile, [playbooks that outline responsibilities of all Games participants](#) and the rules that must be followed to ensure the safety of participants and the people of Japan will be updated in April.



Latest on COVID-19 in Japan

The Declaration of the State of Emergency in response to COVID-19, which had been in place in Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo and Kanagawa prefectures, was lifted as of March 21 to reflect a steep decline in cases. Prime Minister Suga outlined comprehensive countermeasures comprising five pillars that will help to prevent a resurgence of infections. Read more details from his news conference [HERE](#). In addition, Japan is

adapting to [the new normal of adopting efforts to suppress the spread of COVID-19](#) in a variety of ways.

As of March 25, COVID-19 deaths in the US stood at 166.67 per 100,000, while the figure for Japan was at 7.06 per 100,000, according to data from Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center.



[Special Online Program Held in Los Angeles to Mark His Majesty the Emperor's Birthday](#)

The Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles marked His Majesty the Emperor's Birthday with a special online program that featured prominent elected officials from California and a video presentation about the activities of Their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress. Please click the title to watch the program.



(Credit: NEDO)

[Japan's Hydrogen Strategy Showcased in Los Angeles Times](#)

Global leadership by Japan on hydrogen energy, the nation's vision for creating a green and renewable hydrogen energy sector, and ongoing collaboration in southern California in this growing energy sector, are explored in a March 23rd article created by the Los Angeles Times and distributed to its wide readership.

In related news, the Consulate General of Japan co-presented two webinars in March. "The Hydrogen Solution"; the first of which focused on Japan's leadership and programs to help create a Hydrogen Society, with the second webinar drilling down on California State

& City of Los Angeles programs and mandates, and the types of collaboration already happening in the region with Japanese firms and organizations.

- Webinar 1: [Japan's Leadership in Building a Hydrogen Society](#) (presented by JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles, Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles)
- Webinar 2: [Los Angeles' Green Energy Goals and Collaboration from Japan](#) (presented by JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles, Consulate General of Japan, Japan America Society of Southern California)

Conferment Ceremonies for Spring, Fall 2020

Decorations, Consul General's Commendation Held

Conferment ceremonies were held for Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 Decorations, and the Consul General's Commendation. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the ceremonies were held at the Consul General's Official Residence with a very small number of guests.

Learn more about the ceremonies and recipients below:

- [Ms. Nancy Kyoko Oda](#) (Spring 2020 Decorations)
- [Mr. Brian Kito](#) (Spring 2020 Decorations)
- [Mr. Dennis Yukio Otsuji](#) (Fall 2020 Decorations)
- [Mr. Glenn Takeo Tanaka](#) (Fall 2020 Decorations)
- [Mr. Haruo Takehana](#) (Consul General's Commendation)



Japan Business Association of Southern California (JBA) 60th Anniversary

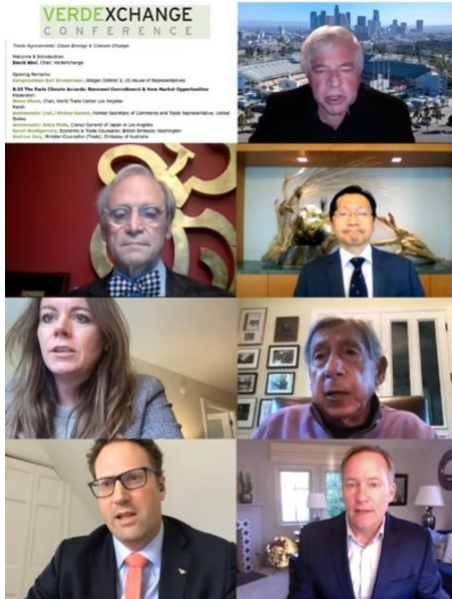
The Japan Business Association of Southern California (JBA) held an online event on March 12, 2021 (Friday) to commemorate the 60th anniversary of its founding. Among dignitaries participating were Japan's Foreign Minister Motegi, Japan Government Representative Kohno, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, California Senate Majority Leader Bob Hertzberg, Congressman Mark Takano, and Torrance Mayor Patrick Furey. Consul General Muto joined a panel discussion on the positive impacts of Japanese Foreign Direct Investment in southern California, and the long-term role Japanese firms have played in supporting the local economy.



Sister Ports of Nagoya & Los Angeles Convene Conference

Marking the first anniversary of their freshly renewed MOU on cooperation and collaboration between the Sister Ports, officials from both ports, private company representatives, and diplomatic representation from both the United States and Japan, convened a virtual conference on March 9th to update on progress in attaining goals and aspirations embedded within the MOU. The Port of Los Angeles, including Port Director Gene Seroka, and Nagoya leadership reconfirmed their commitment to work together, and private companies gave updates on relevant technologies and demonstration projects of possible interest to their counterparts, including the Port Optimizer program

being implemented at the Port of Los Angeles, and collaboration on hydrogen energy solutions by Japanese companies.



VerdeXchange Panel Discussion on Trade and Environment

Welcoming Congressman Earl Blumenauer, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, the VerdeXchange hosted a discussion on the nexus between trade and environmental policies. Consul General Muto indicated the importance of reinvigorating multilateral agreements with US participation as a means of securing greater progress on environmental issues and regional stability – all points universally agreed upon by fellow panelists. Also joining the discussion were Ambassador Mickey Kantor, former USTR and Secretary of Commerce, as well as representatives from both the UK and Australia.



Building Business Ties Between the US and Japan

The Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles collaborated with Global Chamber in LA, Phoenix and Tokyo to present a special virtual program between Japan and US businesses on "Importance and Value of FDI in Arizona for Japanese Companies" Joining the virtual event were Arizona located Japanese firms MUFG Union Bank, IRIS USA and Yokogawa Electric, exchanging information with elected leaders including Arizona Senator Kyrsten Sinema, Arizona Senator Mark Kelly and Phoenix Mayor. Click the image to watch video of the program.



Webinar on Redesigning Communities for an Aging Society ~Kashiwa Model, Japan~

On March 17, the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles and JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles co-presented a webinar entitled "Redesigning Communities for an Aging Society ~Kashiwa Model, Japan~." The main speaker, Dr. Hiroko AKIYAMA, spoke about her

research on the aging society in Japan with a focus on the Kashiwa Project, a social experiment conducted in Kashiwa, Chiba Prefecture, Japan which showcased how a community could be thoughtfully designed to enhance the lives of aging citizens. The webinar was moderated by Ms. Yuko KAIFU, President of JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles.

Local Event Commemorates the March 2011 Earthquake Disaster, Focuses on Disaster Preparedness

This year marks 10 years since the Great East Japan earthquake disaster struck the Tohoku region of Japan. The Love to Nippon Project and JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles held "Be Prepared! Lessons Learned on Readiness and Resilience," featuring a panel of experts and a survivor of one of the strongest earthquakes in history to discuss how best to prepare for and survive a natural disaster.

Japanese Gardens and Tea Rooms

We are highlighting Japanese gardens/tea rooms in our jurisdiction. Please check each location's website for operating hours and current offerings.

[South Coast Botanic Garden \(Rancho Palos Verdes/Rolling Hills Estates, CA\)](#)



The Japanese Garden at South Coast Botanic Garden features a Koi pond and Bonsai Display maintained by South Coast Coast Bonsai Association.



Looking for something entertaining or informative about Japan? Look no further, the [Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles' events calendar](#) includes information about virtual events related to Japan, as well as links to virtual museums.



<http://www.la.us.emb-japan.go.jp> | info@ls.mofa.go.jp
Consulate General of Japan, Los Angeles

