



[CONTENTS, JANUARY,2025]

1. NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

2. 2025 WORLD EXPO UPDATES

3. GIF OSAKA UPDATES

4. NEWS FROM THE OSAKA & KANSAI ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

5. COURTESY VISIT (1ST DECEMBER-31ST DECEMBER)>

E-MAIL MAGAZINE

Issue 197 [January,2025]

OCCI e-Magazine

<Back number available at <http://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/e/emagazine/>>

[illegible]

JANUARY 1, 2025

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

Shingo Torii

Chairperson

Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Happy New Year, everyone.

In the zodiac cycle, 2025 is the year of the snake. The snake's repeated shedding of its skin and its strong life force mean it is associated with rebirth, growth, and longevity. In keeping with this year's zodiac symbol, I hope that this year will be a year of growth for people and businesses everywhere, and the economy overall.

Meanwhile, today marks the start of the Expo Year, in which we in Osaka host the 2025 World Expo. In my view, there are three main points regarding the expo that warrant particular attention.

First is the Grand Ring roof. One of the largest wooden structures in the world, this roof also serves as an elevated promenade offering a pleasant 30-minute stroll and panoramic views. They say the view of the sunset over the Seto Inland Sea seen from the top of the ring is the most beautiful in Japan.

Second is the globally inclusive nature of the expo, in which some 161 countries will participate, along with nine international organizations, including the United Nations, the European Union, ASEAN, the African Union, and the Red Cross not to mention the many private-sector pavilions. Those 161 countries will bring exhibits and experiences of state-of-the-art technology, environmental issues, cultures, cuisines, and more.

Third is the expo's positing of potential "next SDGs" to carry on from the UN's current Sustainable Development Goals, which reach their target date in 2030.

Today, the world is beset with ongoing armed conflict and tragedy. I therefore feel it is significant that Osaka will host an event focused on peace and prosperity, and that 161 countries have committed to participate.

I look forward to the support and cooperation of the OCCI's membership to not only make Expo 2025 a roaring success, but also most importantly to propel Osaka and the broader Kansai region to ongoing growth in the post-expo period. As part of that, the OCCI will run the Reborn Challenges, a zone within the Osaka Healthcare Pavilion for SMEs and startups to exhibit. The Reborn Challenges will feature a weekly rotation of aspirational technologies from some 441 Osaka-based SMEs. Let me give you a few examples. Floating shoes: Footwear that use magnetic force to make shoes "levitate." Suggested possible applications include use by nursing care workers. Photosynthesizing clothes: Clothing made of fabrics covered with plants great fashion design and great for environmental protection. Lunar exploration bike: A low-cost motorbike that can handle lunar surface conditions. On earth, the bike would be ideal for emergency crew travel in, for instance, disaster situations when roads are blocked with traffic congestion. Cargo airship: Developed by a skilled craftsman at a small local factory, this is an airship that can carry goods in bulk.

Wellness office: A system for office workers to maintain health including contactless measuring of biometric data and gauging stress through hair analysis.

These are just some of the aspirational projects that local SMEs are working on in the name of technological development and addressing today's pressing challenges. I hope that the expo will inspire a great pursuit of dreams, in which engineers everywhere will share their ideas and band together with passionate colleagues to seek innovations that might help society overcome those challenges.

This is particularly relevant in a country like Japan, which depends on imports for the majority of its food and energy. We need to foster a native culture of world-class innovation "J-Innovation," if you will in which it is normal for businesses to pursue discovery and progress that can enable us to stay abreast with global

competition. The 441 SMEs participating in the Reborn Challenge as part of the expo are the vanguard of that movement.

Meanwhile, the Japanese economy has been engulfed in recent years by waves of yen depreciation, high material prices, and labor shortages. What, then, is the outlook for 2025 First, the main event on the economic calendar is, of course, World Expo 2025 in Osaka. Second, annual foreign tourist numbers will reach 40 million in 2025. Third, as we embark on the new year, the Japanese economy is on the road to recovery. Osaka is experiencing a mild economic tailwind at the moment, and the IMF has estimated real GDP growth will be 1% in 2025.

Given these circumstances, we at the OCCI will do more than ever to serve our members by focusing on support programs. These include:

Stronger business support

- Financial and business management support through programs such as Marukei
- Helping businesses access public subsidies and grants, e.g., small business continuity subsidy

Helping businesses pass cost increases on to customers

- Support aimed at legislation to ensure correct practices, e.g., the Act against Delay in Payment of Subcontract

Proceeds, Etc. to Subcontractors

- Re-engage with the Declaration of Partnership Building initiative

Helping businesses expand sales channels

- Further upscaling of the Kaimasse and Osaka Kangyoten trade shows
- ASEAN-Japan Business Promotion Platform News and opening up new sales channels overseas
- Helping revitalize Osaka's "shotengai" shopping arcades

Fostering innovation

- Helping innovators find fellow innovators, e.g., local factory networks and startups

Alleviating labor shortages

- Matching worker-hungry businesses with foreign workers, esp. from the ASEAN region
- Helping businesses harness DX and robots to assist with work and reduce reliance on human labor

Using state-of-the-art medical treatments and practices to enhancing Osaka's wellness industry

Helping revitalize Osaka

- Support for the All Osaka's a Stage initiative

- Working with participating organizations to further distill the Greater Minami concept

Stronger HR development support

- Developing a workforce capable of promoting corporate reform and innovation
- Building networks and venues conducive to innovation and ingenuity

All of us at the OCCI are determined to work together to ensure that these measures benefit everyone.

2025 is a milestone year for Osaka, for Japan, and for the world. We at the OCCI are as committed as ever to providing steadfast business support, and to fostering the “yatte minahare” ambition to dream big, take challenges, and never give up among our members, SMEs, start-ups, and the nation’s youth.

This year is the year of the snake, and just as the snake is associated with rebirth, growth, and longevity, I hope that 2025 is a time of rebirth, growth, and longevity for you. On behalf of everyone at the OCCI, I look forward to your continued support and cooperation in the year ahead.

=====

2. 2025 WORLD EXPO UPDATES

Promotional Event Held in Beijing

A Kansai business delegation to China, organized by seven Kansai economic organizations, held an event in Beijing on November 27, 2024, to promote World Expo 2025. The guest of honor was Li Qingshuang, vice chairperson of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, representing the Chinese government. OCCI Chairperson Shingo Torii gave a speech expressing his hope that the expo would be an opportunity to boost personal interaction between China and Japan, while Myaku-myaku, the official expo character, made an appearance to liven up proceedings. The event attracted some 100 Chinese media and travel industry figures.

The travel agents expressed enthusiasm for the expo, saying they hoped to sell expo tours, and commenting that the expo's official theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives" would resonate well in China, where interest in personal health is high.

The World Looks on in Eager Anticipation

As World Expo 2025 opening day approaches and overseas dignitaries are visiting Osaka with increasing frequency, we note a particular uptick in those from northern Europe. A Finnish delegation led by Prime Minister Petteri Orpo and Ambassador Tanja Jaaskelainen came to Osaka and met with representatives of the OCCI, the Kansai Economic Federation, and the Kansai Association of Corporate Executives. The delegates expressed high hopes that the expo will spark a surge in business interaction between the two nations.

Meanwhile, Swedish Ambassador Viktoria Li and Government Representative Cecilia Ekholm visited Osaka in November. Finland and Sweden are planning a joint Northern Europe pavilion at the expo with Norway and other countries in the region, where they will promote their world-leading SDG initiatives.

Hankyu Trains Decked Out in Dutch Expo Theme

If countries participating in World Expo 2025 are to attract visitors to their pavilions and make their presence felt, it is vital that they spread the word around Osaka's about their cultures and initiatives in the run-up to the event. Because of this, the All Osaka's a Stage initiative features a variety of local projects throughout Osaka in collaboration with participating nations. The projects are led by the initiative's demo!expo team, which uses its local networks to come up with something very unique. For instance, on November 23, 2024, the team worked with the Consulate-General of the Netherlands to decorate Hankyu Railway trains in a Dutch theme and hold a special event where visitors could learn about and experience the Dutch custom of flower gifts as well as the nation's sustainability initiatives.

See a report at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1e4S_-S2Lo

“KUUZO~Expo? More like Eatspo!”

In the run-up to the 2025 World Expo, the OCCI is showcasing Osaka many, many, oh-so-many dining options on Instagram. Whet your appetite at the OCCI Instagram account, and give us a follow while you're

there! https://www.instagram.com/osaka_cci/

Tickets for Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai

Firstly, you need to register yourself to Expo2025 website and get your Expo ID. You can buy the ticket, reserve your entry date, and enjoy various services with EXPO ID Admission tickets. You can purchase them with a smartphone or PC. In addition to the ticket, you need to reserve the entry date in advance.

[Click here to purchase admission tickets]

<https://www.expo2025.or.jp/en/tickets-index/>

[Check out the OCCI's 2025 World Expo website at]

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/expo2025/pavilion>

=====

3.GIF OSAKA MEET-UP:US

The OCCI held GIF Osaka Meet-up: US on December 11, 2024, to showcase some outstanding American startups for Japanese companies. The event was held online, and attracted 45 attendees. Six US startups interested in teaming up with Japanese companies or setting up in Japan showcased their technologies and services, and spoke about what they were looking for in a partnership with local companies. Most of the presenting startups had participated in the 23rd Japan-Seattle AI Meetup in September 2024, and have already begun to garner global attention.

ASEAN-Japan Business Promotion Platform to Host GIF ASEAN-Japan

Following on from 2024, the OCCI is scheduled to hold another round of GIF ASEAN-Japan on January 17, 2025, as part of the ASEAN-Japan Business Promotion Platform's initiatives to foster startup ventures. The

event will be held online, and is intended to help to stimulate exchange and innovation between ASEAN nations and Japan.

GIF ASEAN-Japan is operated in partnership by ASEAN Business Promotion Platform

constituents, which include chambers of commerce from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, and the OCCI. It seeks to promote international business development and multilateral cooperation through live pitches by startups showcasing unique technologies.

This edition of GIF ASEAN-Japan will feature up to seven startups carefully selected by the platform's constituent chambers. The startups will present their technologies and services, and outline what they are looking for in a partnership with local companies. The event will be held on Zoom from 15:30 to 17:00 (JST), and is free to attend.

Find out more (in Japanese) about the ASEAN Business Promotion Platform at:

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/abp/>

Phone: +81-6-6944-6400

GIF Osaka Challenge: Participants to Exhibit at CES, One of the World's Largest Trade ShowsThe OCCI will partner with Creative Vision to present the Japan Tech booth at the Consumer Electronics Show, one of the world's largest trade shows, in Las Vegas from January 7 to 10, 2025. Some 28 companies have been selected to

exhibit, including five from Osaka: Kanadevia Corporation (formerly Hitachi Zosen), Jikantechno, Inc., Nisshin Denki Kosaku, KK., Bunkashihon-soken Co., Ltd., and Riko Float Technology Co., Ltd.

Also exhibiting will be Space Walker, Inc., a university startup that develops small, reusable, winged rockets, and winner of the pitch contest at U-Start Up Kansai 2024. If you’re at CES, don’t skip the Japan Tech booth it’s going to be fascinating!

Japan Tech: Booth number 61217 @ the Venetian Expo, 201 Sands Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89109

Find out more about the Japan Tech project at the official website: <https://ces-japantech.jp/en/>

=====

4. NEWS FROM THE OSAKA & KANSAI ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

O-BIC at Hack Osaka

O-BIC partnered with IBPC Osaka, JETRO, and other organizations to showcase leading startups from Japan and around the world at the 12th annual Hack Osaka on November 26, 2024. As with every previous Hack Osaka, this year’s event brought together a variety of stakeholders, including investors, startups, major corporations, and research institutions. O-BIC remains committed to partnering with a variety of institutions to help overseas businesses set up in Osaka. If you are interested in investing in Osaka, O-BIC is your first port of call.

website at <https://o-bic.net/>

Expo 2025 Leads to Uptick in FDI Inquiries to O-BIC

O-BIC, which was established in April 2001 by the Osaka prefectural and city governments, and the OCCI, fields around 150 inquiries relating to FDI every year. Between April 1 and December 6, 2024, there were 177 inquiries from 53 countries and regions. Notably, the fast-approaching World Expo 2025 has led to an increase in contact from areas of the world that have traditionally generated relatively few consultations. There were 22 inquiries from 16 countries and regions in the Middle East and Africa (around 12% of total). At the same time, there was an uptick in inquiries from overseas startups, as well. As always, China topped the list with 47 inquiries (26%), followed by the Republic of Korea and the USA. At the time of writing (Dec. 6, 2024), there have been 13 investments this year, including three each from China and the Republic of Korea.

Osaka One of Conde Nast's "Best Places to Go in Asia" 2025

Osaka has been selected as one of the Best Places to Go in Asia in 2025 by leading travel publication Conde Nast Traveler. The magazine rated Osaka's rich culinary culture, sports, culture and arts, convenient transportation infrastructure, and luxury hotels such as Patina Osaka and the Waldorf Astoria Osaka, and expressed high hopes for World Expo 2025. Read the article at <https://www.cntraveler.com/story/best-things-to-do-in-osaka>.

=====

5.<COURTESY VISIT (1ST DECEMBER-31ST DECEMBER)>

(Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland) 12th December

- H.E. Mr. Petteri ORPO

(Consulate-General of the Republic of Panama)20 th December

-H. E. Mr. Alejandro de Le?n de la Guardia

=====

And finally, some Osaka trivia. This month’s newsletter includes mention of Hankyu Railway. Did you know that the founder of Hankyu Railway, Ichizo Kobayashi, is quite the legend in local business circles? One of his best-known episodes was the time he turned conventional thinking on its head. In the early days of his railway, passenger numbers were low and employees struggled to come up with PR messaging that could paper over the fact that their trains were empty. “No, THAT’S the message,” insisted Kobayashi. His idea was to proactively talk up the ostensibly negative fact that the trains were empty. Not only would it be seen as humorous in a self-deprecating way, it would also imply that people could ride in comfort.

=====

[O-BIC as one-stop service center for creating a foothold in Osaka]

<http://o-bic.net/>

[Information about scheduled events (in Japanese only)]

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/event/index.php>

[linkedin]

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/osaka-o-bic-2025/recent-activity/all/>



Chief Editor :NEGORO Takayoshi(Mr.), Director of International Division, OCCI

Mailed by : Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, International Division

Address : 2-8 Hommachi-bashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka, Japan 540-0029

The Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Tel : +81-(0)6-6944-6400

Fax : +81-(0)6-6944-6293

Contact Persons :SHIMIZU Ryosuke(Mr.),TAKEDA Yohei (Mr.)

Back Numbers of OCCI e-Magazine:

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/e/emagazine/>



* Please contact us by email (intl@osaka.cci.or.jp)

to inform us of your change of e-mail address, or of your wishes not to receive OCCI e-Magazine.