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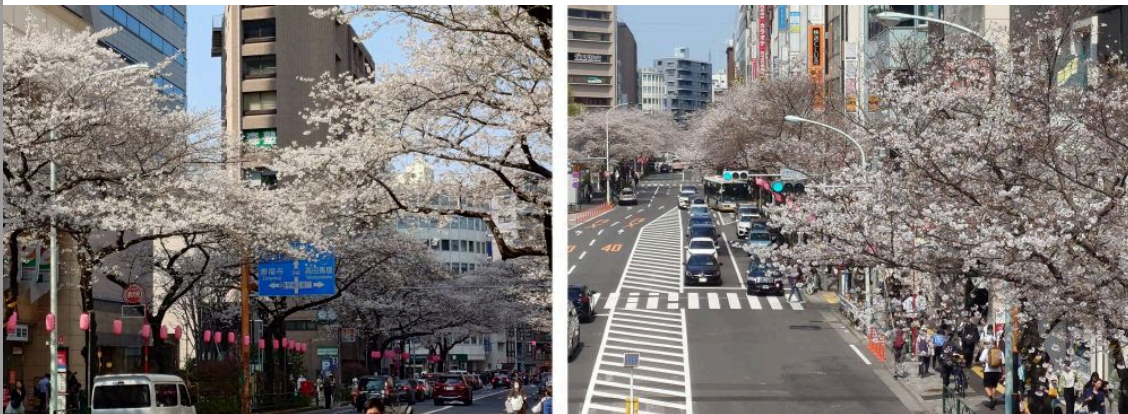


[The Nippon Foundation News] Sakura and Hanami

Please note that from this month, The Nippon Foundation News is being sent from a new email address. To ensure that you continue to receive The Nippon Foundation News without interruption, please add our new address to your contact list or “safe senders” list.

New Email Address: [pr@ps.nippon-foundation.or.jp]

Previous Email Address: [info_global_communication@ps.nippon-foundation.or.jp]



Sakura cherry trees in bloom in Tokyo on March 29

Sakura cherry blossoms are known around the world as a symbol of Japan, and in Japan as a symbol of spring. There are various species and types of trees, which do not bear fruit but have white or pink flowers that bloom for a short time in the early spring. Because of their beauty and the fact that the flowers are only on the trees for one or two weeks before falling to the ground, they are seen as representing both the beauty and promise of new life and the fact that beauty is fleeting and life is short. *Hanami* flower-viewing picnics are popular as friends, families, or coworkers gather to enjoy eating and drinking under the blossoms. Popular parks and other locations can be very crowded, so one or two members of a group may even go there the evening before to secure a space for their group the next day. To help people plan their hanami events, television weather forecasts from mid-March include forecasts of when the trees are expected to bloom across the country. In Tokyo, the trees usually blossom from late March to early April. The determination for when they are in full bloom in Tokyo is made by Japan's Meteorological Agency based on a designated tree at Yasukuni Shrine in central Tokyo, and this year they were declared to be in full bloom on March 28.

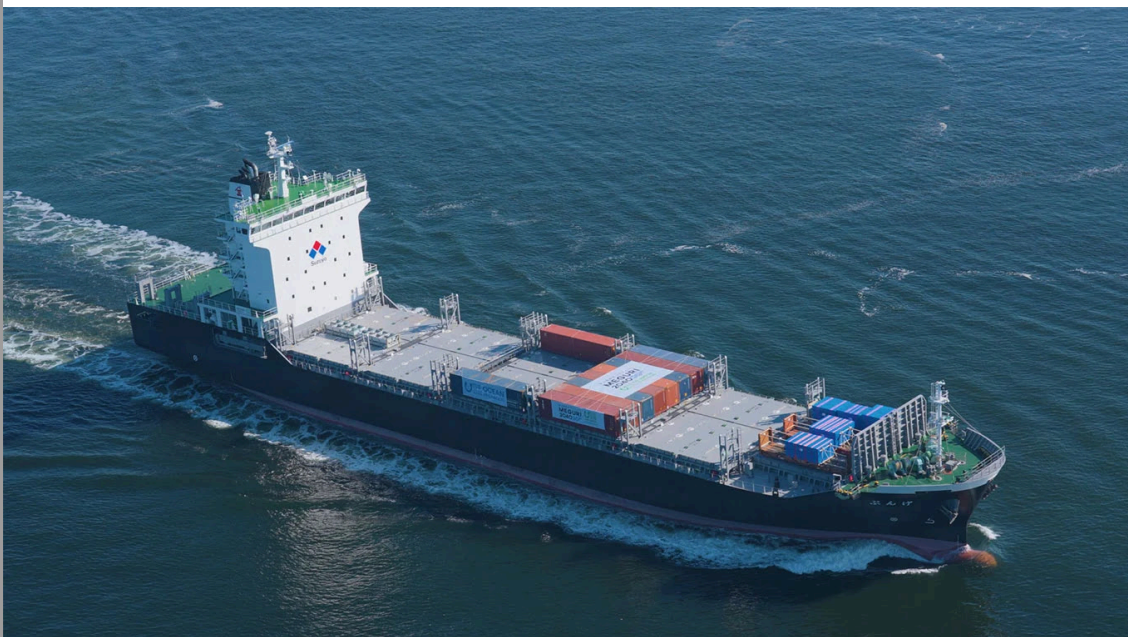
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News

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2. **Considering Models to Support University Students with Disabilities in Indonesia** (March 6, 2026)
3. **Survey of Disability Researchers in Southeast Asia** (March 16, 2026)

World's 1st Automated Coastal Container Vessel (MASS) Enters Commercial Service

Newly built vessel with Level 4 autonomous navigation functions

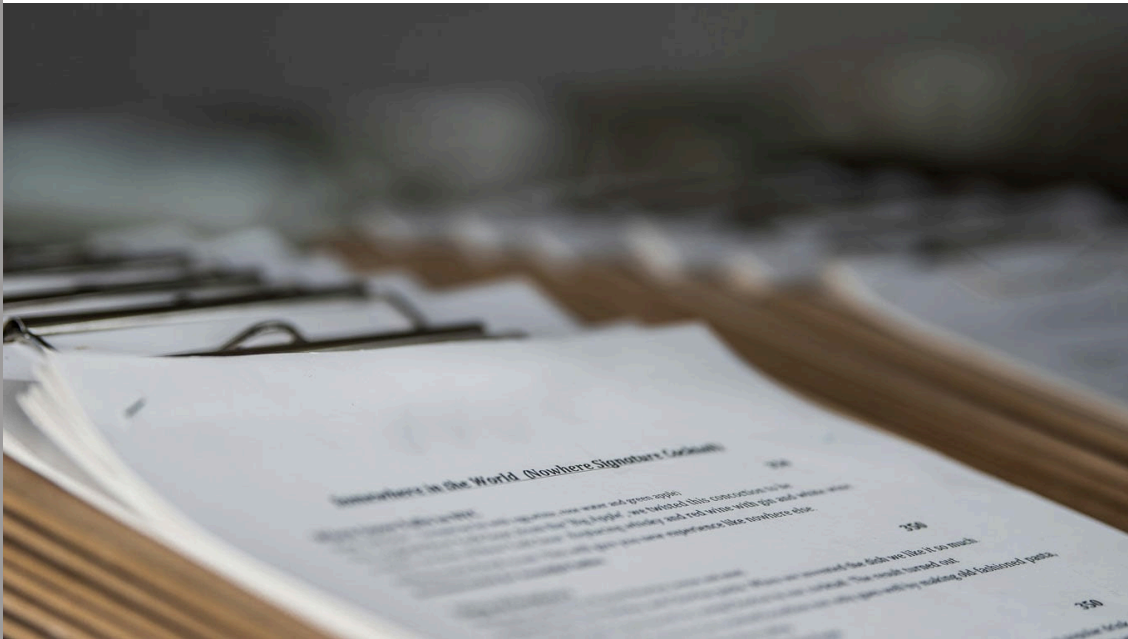


The Nippon Foundation's MEGURI2040 Fully Autonomous Ship Program aims to address the issue of crew shortages and reduce accidents caused by human error by achieving autonomous navigation and implementing stable transport for people and goods. The coastal container vessel *GENBU* has completed autonomous navigation demonstration testing and received certifications to enter regular service as the world's first vessel engaged in "commercial service," carrying regular cargo and equipped with autonomous navigation functions.

[Full Article](#)

Considering Models to Support University Students with Disabilities in Indonesia

Comparative analysis of support at Japanese and Indonesian universities



The Nippon Foundation has commissioned a survey on the current status and challenges of support for students with disabilities in higher education institutions in Japan and Indonesia. Major differences were seen in the support structures in place at institutions of higher education, and the survey aimed to identify issues in Indonesia and consider suitable support models for local circumstances based on Japan's support frameworks, expertise in implementation, and cross-university networking experience.

[Full Article](#)

Survey of Disability Researchers in Southeast Asia

Identifying graduate-level professors and lecturers to train specialist human resources

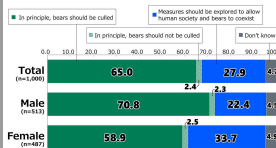


The Nippon Foundation has commissioned a survey of university professors and lecturers who are engaged in research to resolve issues in the disability field and teaching in master's degree programs in seven Southeast Asian countries. The survey was intended to promote the training of specialist human resources to resolve issues by organizing and publicizing information on qualified professors and lecturers, to make it easier to identify appropriate instructors in students' fields of interest.

[Full Article](#)

Yohei Sasakawa Blog

Honorary Chair of The Nippon Foundation



[Two Thirds of Japanese Youths Support Culling Bears to Stem Record Deadly Attacks: Poll](#) [2026/04/06]



[Japanese Consortia Start Commercial Service of Two Fully Autonomous Ships Under the "MEGURI2040" Project \(1\)](#) [2026/03/26]



[Honored to Receive Honorary Doctoral Degree from Poland's Gdynia Maritime University_\(1\)](#), [2026/03/19]

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