

Japan does least for lesser countries: U.S. journal

WASHINGTON (Kyodo) Japan does the least of the 21 richest nations to improve lives in developing countries, according to Foreign Policy magazine.

The annual commitment to development index by the Center for Global Development and the magazine ranked Japan in last place again this year as it has the highest trade barriers for exports from developing countries, such as a high tariff on rice, and its foreign aid is the smallest as a share of income.

"Japan also has a poor environmental record from the perspective of poor countries and admits very few immigrants," the magazine said in its latest edition.

Japan's strongest contributions to development are through government support for research and development and through policies that promote investment in poor countries, though even in these areas Japan is only an average performer, the magazine said, adding there is only a "small amount of private charitable giving attributable to tax policy."

The magazine noted, however, one improvement, saying, "One country that made strides this year is Japan," as it reportedly put an end to the long-held practice of lobbying poor-country governments against enforcing labor, rights and environmental standards for Japanese-owned plants.

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