

Azerbaijan national day

The European Games will transform the capital city

Azad Rahimov
MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS

In June 2015, Azerbaijan will become the center of the sporting world, when the capital city of Baku hosts the inaugural European Games.

The Baku 2015 European Games will be a spectacular showcase of elite athletes that will unite Europe in a unique celebration of sport and have a transformative effect on the city itself. The games are part of President Ilham Aliyev's vision to cement our country's position as a dynamic and hospitable cultural and business center.

In December 2012, Azerbaijan was awarded the games by the European Olympic Committees. For Baku, this was the perfect opportunity to put sport at the heart of its social, cultural and economic development and to show the world what its people are capable of.

As the first ever event of its type on the continent, the Baku 2015 European Games Operations Committee (BEGOC) has been tasked with creating a memorable and innovative competition.

The opening ceremony will be held in the newly built National Stadium on Friday June 12, and the following 17 days will see more than 6,000 athletes competing for the right to be called European Games champion.

And by the time the curtain falls on the closing ceremony on Sunday, June 28, 253 gold medals will have been won and a fresh perspective of Azerbaijan and Baku will have been embraced by the people of Europe.



The Olympic Stadium in Baku EMBASSY OF AZERBAIJAN

The games will have 18 competition venues, including newly built venues for the sports of gymnastics, BMX, aquatics and shooting, as well as a purpose-built, 65,000-seat stadium that will host athletics and the opening and closing ceremonies. Add that to the impressive Flame Towers that dominate the Baku skyline, the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center and the gleaming new airport terminal and it is little wonder that many marvel at just how transformative the games have been for Baku.

The European Games also represent an opportunity to introduce innovative types of sport to the international calendar. In total, 20 sports will be represented, with four exciting non-Olympic sports — three-on-three basketball, beach soccer, karate and sambo — set to feature.

Baku 2015 has ensured that everything is in place for competitors to excel and the results will grant a lasting legacy for Azerbaijan in infrastructure, sporting and human terms. The population of Azerbaijan is one of the youngest in Europe, and the inspiration that the European Games will provide will be passed on to generations of Azerbaijani athletes through the world-class facilities built for Baku 2015.

Azerbaijan has always had a passion for sport, and its investment in these games will pay dividends in the future as the country hosts further events such as the Baku Formula 1 European Grand Prix in 2016, the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games and four matches of the UEFA Euro 2020 tournament.

By June, Baku will be ready to host a memorable and historic first edition of the European Games. The spectacular opening ceremony will captivate the capacity crowd in the National Stadium and be enjoyed by a worldwide television audience of millions thanks to the announced deals to broadcast the Games in 57 countries, including in Japan.

But the true impact of Baku 2015 will be much greater, extending beyond those two weeks in June, and creating a new legacy of sporting brilliance in Europe's most dynamic new destination.



Making constructive contributions in the global arena

Gursel Ismayilzada
AMBASSADOR OF AZERBAIJAN

It is my great pleasure to address the readers of The Japan Times

on the occasion of National Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan and to extend my warmest greetings and sincere wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and the friendly people of Japan, as well as the Azerbaijani community residing in Japan.

This year we celebrate the 97th anniversary of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, which was established in 1918 as the first democratic republic created in the Muslim World. Azerbaijan's independence was short-lived and the Republic became part of the Soviet Union in 1920, with the independence of Azerbaijan restored in 1991.

Azerbaijan is continuing along the path of independence and development. The unique phenomenon in the continued growth of Azerbaijan lies upon the stability of the political and economic situation, the unity between the people and leadership under President Ilham Aliyev and the pursuance of target-oriented policies.

In the past decade, Azerbaijan has been one of the fastest growing countries in the world in terms of economic development. According to the Davos World Economic Forum's 2015 Competitiveness Report it is ranked among the top 40 coun-

tries in the world.

Over the years we have created a powerful energy potential. Today it is no secret that the energy security of a country provides for its national security. Azerbaijan has accumulated a unique experience in using oil revenues correctly and converting the "black gold" into human capital.

While hydrocarbon resources are a key driver of economy, diversification is one of the main pillars of the economic policy of Azerbaijan. Agriculture is the second biggest part in terms of labor and potential. Thus, 2015 was announced as a "Year of Agriculture" in Azerbaijan. The rich fertile lands, abundance of water and climatic diversity create favorable conditions for a strong agriculture sector. It is now one of the main developed non-oil areas of the economy, attracting foreign trade partners and investors with great business opportunities. The main exports are fresh vegetables and fruits, vegetable and animal oils, sugar products, tea, processed vegetables and fruits, beverages, tobacco products, cotton and others.

Azerbaijan, as an active member of international organizations, makes valuable contributions to the successful activities of these organizations. Last year we chaired the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. It was a period of very successful presidency. During this period Azerbaijan made a huge and valuable contribution to the development of democracy and the protection of human rights and justice in Europe. Our country's experi-

ence associated with multiculturalism is unique.

As a clear token of aforementioned development, the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, has been selected to hold the first-ever European Games. The Baku 2015 European Games are an exciting and innovative multi-sport event for the continent that will take place from June 12 to 28. Choosing Baku for a global sporting event is not by chance, as the city is also in preparations to hold the Formula-1 Baku European Grand Prix. Additionally, in 2017, the Islamic Solidarity Games will also be held in Baku. Over the course of just two years, both European and Islamic games will be organized in Azerbaijan. Located between Europe and Asia, on the ancient Silk Road, Azerbaijan is recognized as a country ensuring coexistence and dialogue among civilizations, as it is a member of both the European and Asian families.

The year 2015 introduced a new phase of engagement between Azerbaijan and Japan marked by the exchange of high-level visits.

H.E. Ogtay Asadov, the chairman of the Milli Mejlis (parliament) paid an official visit to Japan from April 19 to 25. His visit underlined the strategic importance of the bilateral relations between our two countries and gave impetus to further strengthening the existing friendly relations based on mutual trust and respect.

Earlier this month, the successful organization of the annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Devel-

opment Bank was hosted in Baku. It equally shows the choice of Azerbaijan to enhance strong ties not only with Europe, but also with Asia as we affiliate ourselves with both continents. During the recent visit of H.E. Taro Aso, Japan's deputy prime minister and minister of finance, to Azerbaijan to attend an ADB conference, bilateral meetings with the leadership of Azerbaijan boosted further the partnership between two coun-

tries.

The exchange of visits has indeed been exposing new areas of cooperation between the two countries and open new horizons of cooperation for the benefit of our two nations. We are committed to a vibrant and long-term relationship with Japan.

I take this opportunity to wish friendly people of Japan peace, prosperity and sustainable development.

*Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day*

INPEX
INPEX CORPORATION

Akasaka Biz Tower,
5-3-1 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-6332 Japan

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

Engineering for the Quality of Human Life
JGC CORPORATION

Yokohama World Operations Center:
2-3-1, Minato Mirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-6001, Japan
Tel: 81-45-682-1111 Fax: 81-45-682-1112

<http://www.jgc.com/>

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

Mitsubishi Corporation

Tokyo Head Office: 3-1, Marunouchi 2-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Baku Office: Hyatt Tower II, 5th Floor, 1033 Izmir Ave., Baku,
Republic of Azerbaijan

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day



MITSUI & CO.

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

Shinyei Group,
Your partner for prosperous society
SHINYEI KAISHA

<http://www.shinyei.co.jp/>

Head Office 77-1 Kyomachi, Chuo-ku, Kobe Tel. 078-392-6988