

# Cuba National Day Special

## Salute to solidarity in struggle against COVID

**MIGUEL ANGEL RAMIREZ RAMOS**  
AMBASSADOR OF CUBA



On Jan. 1, the Republic of Cuba celebrates its national day in commemoration of the 63rd anniversary of the Triumph of the Revolution. On this day, Fidel Castro achieved the real

independence of our people during a process of more than a century of struggles in which the Cuban people freed themselves from Spanish colonialism and later from the American neocolonialism domain.

Since then, the firm determination to build a more just and prosperous society for everybody has prevailed. Guided by that principle, the Cuban socialist state guarantees a free and universal health care system. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has provided medical care to every patient without any cost. In addition, it has offered international aid to more than 40 countries and territories who requested it by sending over 50 brigades formed by thousands of doctors, nurses and health technicians.

The political will of the Cuban government created the conditions, despite economic hardships, to achieve a 0.86% COVID-19 fatality rate in December, far below the 1.95% worldwide rate and the 2.39% rate logged on the American continent. Meanwhile, in Cuba, 99.1% of infected people have recovered.

These results show the success of the

vaccination campaign that took place in every territory. Cuba leads in daily injections per 100 people, and more than 84.1% of its population has completed the vaccine schedule. In the meantime, over 90% of the population has received at least one dose.

Cuba stands out as the first and only country worldwide that has vaccinated 97% of its pediatric population over the age of 2. This has allowed children to make a safe and happy return to classrooms.

Many countries, including Japan, have been amazed that Cuba successfully carried out this massive immunization developed and promoted by its biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries.

While only a small and exclusive group of nations, mainly industrialized, and some major companies have developed vaccines against COVID-19, Cuba has pioneered five candidates. Three of them, Soberana 02, Abdala and Soberana Plus, have been used not only in our country, but also in countries such as Vietnam, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Iran. The other two candidates, Mambisa and Soberana 01, are in advanced clinical trials.

In 2021, Cuba had the honor of participating in the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. I would like to congratulate all Japanese authorities and citizens who contributed and volunteered to ensure the decisive success of this great event. Our delegation preserves vivid memories of its visit to Japan despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic.

The friendly rivalry among our athletes was evident in many sports, such as judo and Greco-Roman wrestling. Cuba proved

one more time its great sportive quality and dedication by reaching 14th place in the medal standings.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the Japanese people for their traditional solidarity with our country. We are especially thankful for the generous donatives to the Cuban health system, which helped many hospitals deal with this pandemic.

We also appreciate Japan's traditional support in our claims for the immediate end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, the longest and most severe system of sanctions ever applied against any country. It has been tightened to unprecedented levels, even during the pandemic.

On behalf of the Cuban people and government, I want to send our best wishes of peace and prosperity to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, other members of the imperial family, as well as the government and the people of Japan.

To all readers, we reiterate our warmest invitation to travel to Cuba, which safely opened its border to tourism on Nov. 15. We are sure you will enjoy our natural beauty, cultural richness and historical heritage. There you will find hospitable and joyful people who have always felt deep admiration and respect for the Japanese people.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



A cyclist stops to take a photo of a ship along the Havana waterfront; Below: Cuba's biotech industry is key to its impressive efforts to halt the pandemic.

VLADIMIR MOLINA; ROBERTO SUAREZ



Top: A street in Old Havana with a view of the Minor Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi; Above: Mijain Lopez achieved the historic record of four gold medals in a row in Greco-Roman wrestling at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. HAVANA CAMPAIGN; OLYMPICS.COM

Cuba's official  
tourism website



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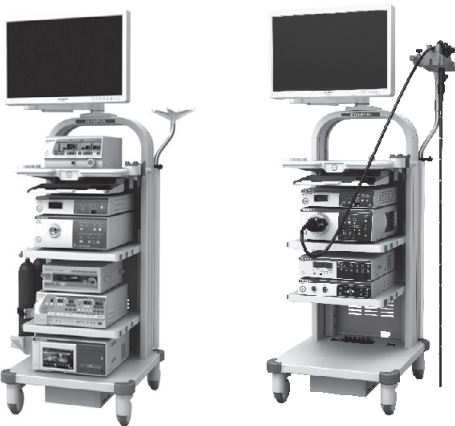
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