

Lithuania National Day Special

Freedom is a reward that must be earned

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The history of Lithuania is a complex lesson and a humbling experience. We mark two Independence Days every year: the Day of Restoration of the State of Lithuania on Feb. 16, and Independence Restoration Day on March 11. Both

refer to “restoration,” as Lithuanian statehood dates as far back as the 13th century.

On Feb. 16, 1918, when our brave forefathers affixed signatures to the Act of Independence of Lithuania, they laid out the legal foundation for the existence of modern Lithuania, and, ultimately, the groundwork for Lithuania’s re-establishment of independence on March 11, 1990. Our two Independence Days thus bear witness to the fact that, against all odds, Lithuania has withstood astounding geopolitical storms over the ages.

We know firsthand the precious price of freedom. We are aware that freedom is never given. It must be taken. Even if,

unfortunately for us, our own strive for independence was severed abruptly by Russian occupation, we know that Lithuania’s freedom is of even greater significance today. Our independence allows us to make our own decisions, choose our own destiny, be an active member of the international community and claim our rightful place among democratic nations.

Modern Lithuania is prosperous, open and growing. Openness to innovation, an increasingly digitized society, and a stamp of approval from hundreds of leading global companies: That’s Lithuania today. But underneath the ratings and rankings lies the most important element — our people. Things here get done quicker and better, because the go-getters — from students to engineers — are agile, ambitious and driven by big ideas. When it comes to big ideas, we do not fret nor dabble, we fearlessly explore. From gene and cell therapy to the latest in machine learning, Lithuania strives to be at the forefront. That also includes our active communities and nongovernmental organizations.

Lithuania is a loyal international ally and a reliable neighbor — we commit to alliances and care deeply about our neighbors in distress. A recent fundraising campaign

by NGOs has collected €14 million to purchase tactical surveillance radars to monitor Ukraine’s airspace — an immense civil society effort and a remarkable demonstration of our unity.

We appreciate Japan as our key partner. Last year, which was the centenary of our diplomatic relations, a strategic partnership was announced by our prime ministers. We are inspired by the progress of the implementation of the commitments undertaken and hope it will continue gaining speed.

As we celebrate the independence of Lithuania, our hearts and minds are in Ukraine. The second year of a war of choice waged by Russia has begun. The war has taken countless civilian lives, but not the Ukrainian desire for freedom.

We are aware, that by defending their native soil on the battlefield today, Ukrainians are defending the values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and above all — the rules-based international order. They protect all of us.

We are inspired by the continuous position of the government of Japan that was one of the first states outside of Europe to announce its unwavering support to Ukraine and thankful for its valuable assistance efforts. Democratic members of the

international community — from Lithuania to Japan — will continue to support Ukraine until victory.

On this Independence Restoration Day celebration, we commit to building a future for freedom.

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



Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pose after announcing the Lithuania-Japan strategic partnership in October 2022.

LITHUANIAN EMBASSY

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on the Anniversary of
the Restoration of Independence
of the Republic of Lithuania



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on the Anniversary of
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City of Tsuruga

Congratulations
on the Anniversary of the Restoration of
Independence of the Republic of Lithuania



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