

Georgia Independence Day Special

A stable and trusted investment destination

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AMBASSADOR OF GEORGIA



On May 26, Georgians celebrate the 105th anniversary of the restoration of our statehood. Exactly 105 years ago, we declared independence and established the First Democratic Republic

of Georgia.

Our nation chose a path of peaceful and democratic development to create a free country, with free people respecting the rule of law, democracy and human rights. Unfortunately, the first republic ceased to exist as a result of the Soviet occupation in 1921, until we regained our freedom in 1991.

It must be underlined that Japan was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Georgia both during the first republic, as well as in 1992. Japan has always been a loyal friend and valuable partner to our nation, supporting Georgians in the hardest times throughout our journey to building democratic institutions and a sustainable economy. Thanks to our international friends and the dedication of Georgian society, we managed to overcome all the obstacles in an incredibly short period of time, making us one of the most progressive countries in the region.

According to prominent international rankings, Georgia is one of the safest countries in the world, with one of the most liberal and flexible tax systems, an exceptionally positive investment climate and a business-friendly government. Located in

a geopolitically important area, we form a crossroads of important trading routes, pipelines and transnational infrastructure projects. Georgia is an economic, trade and logistical hub with free-trade regimes with almost all the important stakeholders around, including the European Union, Turkey and China, among others.

We are also proud of our unique culture, history, traditions, amazing cuisine and oldest tradition of winemaking in the world. Yes, we are the homeland of wine. The first wine was made in this region about 8,000 years ago. Japanese food and Georgian wine are a great combination, and both were added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2013. By the way, from this month onwards, you can also enjoy sushi and wine pairings at the well-known Sushizanmai restaurant chain. We are proud of our exceptionally diverse nature and mesmerizing landscapes. The congruence of these makes Georgia one of the most rapidly growing tourism destinations, attracting millions from all around the planet.

During the pandemic, when tourists had limited means of visiting Georgia, *shkmeruli* (chicken in garlic milk), *khachapuri* (cheese bread) and other Georgian dishes became popular in Japan, garnering more interest in our cuisine, history and culture. Now with the easing of border-crossing regulations, we hope the flow of tourists between our countries will be re-established and surpass previous numbers in a short period.

Georgia and Japan have many important similarities. We both are among the oldest countries and have exceptional cultures of hospitality. Both our nations succeeded in preserving their traditions while becoming modern societies. Most importantly, we

have exemplary positive political and economic relationships.

I am happy that our relationships have especially intensified recently with a number of high-level political visits from Georgia to Japan and vice versa. During recent years, Japan and Georgia have signed a bilateral investment treaty, an agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and a memorandum of cooperation establishing a joint crediting mechanism. As a result, we are witnessing increased interest from Japanese companies in doing business in Georgia, notably in the energy, hospitality and manufacturing spheres. For example, we are delighted that just recently, Tepco Renewable Power Inc. decided to invest in Georgia's green energy sector, providing new stimulus for even more intense economic and trade relationships.

It is noteworthy that Georgia, due to its abundant water resources, has one of the cleanest energy systems in the world — 85% of our electricity comes from renewable sources — and increasing this share is a strategic priority of the government. This strategy stands in line with the progressive views on our planet's ecology and future energy development. At the same time, it makes Georgia's business and manufacturing environment even more attractive.

In addition, Georgia is commencing a transnational submarine cable project in the Black Sea, which will connect our country with Romania. The cable is expected to boost our electricity export figures, contribute to stronger connectivity with the European Union and establish Georgia as an exporter of renewable energy.

Despite far-reaching challenges the global economy has had to face in recent

years, Georgia marked double-digit economic growth in both 2021 and 2022. This, together with other positive economic figures, once again proved us to be a stable and trustworthy investment destination. Georgia's growth did not pass unnoticed by the Japanese private sector, and we have high expectations for further deepening bilateral economic ties.

In the end, I would like to once again express words of gratitude to our friends in Japan for their important contribution to the development of Georgia, for engaging in extremely positive political, economic and cultural relationships, and for supporting our sovereignty and territorial integrity. I am absolutely sure that our already excellent relationship will become even closer and more cordial in the years to come.

Gaumarjos (cheers).

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



Above left: Tbilisi lies on the banks of the Mtkvari River. Above right: Traditional cuisine is an important element of Georgian culture. GETTY IMAGES




Congratulations to the people of Georgia on their Independence Day



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