

Iceland National Day Special

A strong commitment to gender equality

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AMBASSADOR OF ICELAND



Iceland's National Day, June 17, honors the establishment of the Republic of Iceland in 1944, a day of great significance for Icelanders, who deeply value their independence and sovereignty.

The Japanese government invited Iceland's President Gudni Johannesson to be the keynote speaker at the World Assembly for Women, in December 2022. This occasion provided a platform to exchange ideas and experiences on promoting gender equality, an area in which Iceland has excelled. When called upon, we take great pleasure in sharing the lessons from Iceland's journey to holding the title of the world's most gender-equal country for 13 years, according to the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. This is the result of decades-long, concerted efforts by nongovernmental organizations, the government, legislators and the private sector toward building a gender-equal society. However, the work is not yet complete.

Achieving gender equality requires unwavering commitment to inclusivity

and equal opportunities for all citizens, challenging gender stereotypes, empowering women and establishing a more equitable society through progressive policies and legislation on equal pay, parental leave, childcare, education and health.

During Johannessen's discussions with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, they also covered arctic issues, energy transition and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In March, Iceland's Minister of the Environment, Energy and Climate Gudlaugur Thor Thordarson attended the Arctic Circle Japan Forum. He emphasized the significance of international collaboration on arctic matters, particularly climate change mitigation, sustainable development and environmental protection.

Thordarson also met Japanese Minister of the Environment Akihiro Nishimura and State Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Shinichi Nakatani.

To further the dialogue on climate and global energy, Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Yasutoshi Nishimura met with Thordarson on April 30 in Reykjavik, where they signed a joint statement on geothermal energy cooperation between Iceland and Japan.

These high-level visits exemplify the strong and amicable relations between Iceland and Japan, built on mutual respect and trust.

During Iceland's presidency of the Council of Europe, we had the honor of hosting the council's fourth-ever Summit of Heads of State and Government in Reykjavik in May.

Iceland's presidency focused on four main priorities: strengthening the core values of the Council of Europe, protecting the environment, advancing gender equality, involving men and boys, and empowering children and youth.

The historic Reykjavik summit reaffirmed the shared commitment of its 46 member states to upholding core values, including human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It also adopted a strategic vision for the organization's future, addressing crucial issues such as human dignity, social cohesion, digital transformation, climate action and democratic security.

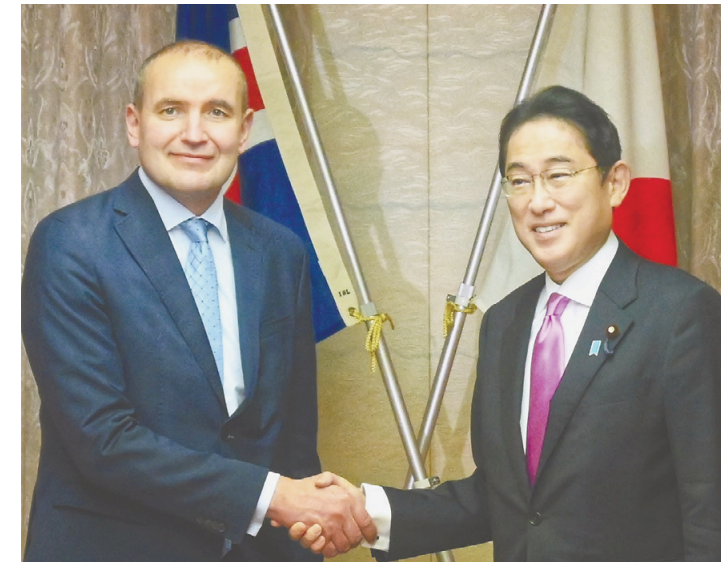
Throughout Iceland's presidency, we enjoyed fruitful dialogue and cooperation with Japan as an observer state and valued partner of the council.

We welcome Japan's participation in the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, as outlined in the Reykjavik Declaration. This registry was one of the significant outcomes of the Reykjavik summit, demonstrating our solidarity and support for Ukraine's sover-

eignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russia's aggression and violation of international law.

On Iceland's National Day, we extend warm wishes to the people of Japan, hoping that our friendship will continue to thrive and foster understanding, prosperity, and shared accomplishments for generations to come.

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



President Gudni Johannesson and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pose at a meeting on Dec. 3 in Tokyo.
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND

Congratulations on the Occasion of the Icelandic National Day



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