

Panama Independence Day Special

A trade bridge spanning the oceans

CARLOS PERE
AMBASSADOR OF PANAMA



As the ambassador of Panama in Japan, it is with great pride and enthusiasm that I oversee the celebration of Nov. 3, Panama's National Day, in this beautiful country. This annual celebration is

a testament to the enduring bond between Panama and Japan, which started almost 120 years ago on Jan. 7.

The celebration next year of 12 decades of relations between Panama and Japan marks a history of friendship, cooperation and mutual growth that has flourished since this bond was established in 1904. The beginning of our diplomatic relations came at a crucial time for Panama, shortly after it gained independence from Colombia. Japan was one of the first countries to recognize our sovereignty and establish diplomatic relations, marking the start of a

relationship that has withstood the test of time and has solidified over the years.

This initial connection laid the foundation for strong bilateral cooperation, which has evolved into investment projects, cultural exchanges and technical and humanitarian assistance in a diverse array of fields, such as construction and maritime transportation.

One of the most remarkable symbols of our relationship is the Panama Canal. Not only is Japan one of the top three users of the Panama Canal, but during its expansion phase, completed in 2016, Japanese companies played a key role, via cutting-edge technology, engineering expertise and financial support. This expansion has increased the canal's capacity to accommodate larger vessels and facilitated more efficient trade routes between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, benefiting both nations and the world.

Another remarkable instance in our history is exemplified by the sublime role Japan has played in advancing the construction of the Panama Metro's third line.

Japan's involvement has been multifaceted and far-reaching, with crucial loans and

resources provided through the Japan International Cooperation Agency allowing us to embark on this ambitious rail project.

Japanese engineers and experts are sharing their technological knowledge and experience, ensuring the project is executed efficiently and safely, becoming instrumental in the construction of the line.

Panama's workforce has experienced a positive impact, with Japan's technical assistance and training programs empowering our professionals and labor force to manage, operate and maintain this sophisticated infrastructure effectively. This knowledge transfer is an enduring legacy that will continue to benefit our country long after the project's completion.

The collaboration between our nations in this endeavor is improving our urban transportation system and strengthening our bonds of friendship and cooperation. Japan's commitment to our country's progress through this project is a shining example of international partnership and goodwill.

I believe the annual celebration of Panama's National Day serves as a valuable platform for cultural exchange, enabling both



Panama's *diabolicos* (devils) perform a traditional folk dance, combining elements of both indigenous and Spanish cultures. EMBASSY OF PANAMA

Panamanians and Japanese to learn from each other and foster a deep appreciation for our respective traditions. It is during these moments that our nations find common ground, transcending boundaries and forging lasting connections.

Panama's National Day celebration is a tangible expression of the warm and close ties between our nations, a reminder that diplomacy, at its heart, is about people and their shared experiences. It is a true honor to witness this cultural exchange that enriches our bilateral ties and makes our diplomatic mission here more rewarding.

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

**Congratulations
on the Anniversary of
the Independence of
the Republic of Panama**

 **Mitsubishi Corporation**