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# Peru independence day

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## Many achievements amid new challenges

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AMBASSADOR OF PERU

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The long-lasting, influential Peruvian history flows from far beyond Caral, passing through Chavin culture and the Inca empire, and becomes what it is today: a demonstration of a growing, leading country in Latin America.



Nevertheless, among the key events that headed toward the formation of contemporary Peru, there was a milestone in 1821 that we rejoice today as the beginning of a new promise. This main occurrence changed the perspective of what could be achieved in the 19th century if everyone would fight together for the same cause: the Peruvian Independence.

Nowadays, fulfilling that promise, Peru emerges again as a main character in the Latin American region, showing a scenario of sustained economic expansion — reached for 13 consecutive years and at

7.2 percent average growth over the past five years — and positive expectations for the future. Providing strength to Peruvian development, sustainable growth is even higher because of the recent announcements of public (30 percent) and private (15.4 percent) investment project execution, as well as growth of internal consumption (5 percent). Moreover, the responsible economic policy has strengthened the financial system, maintained public expenditures (0.5 percent gross domestic product surplus), and reduced the debt-to-GDP ratio (21.7 percent). The optimum panorama offered by Peru is acknowledged by main organizations and risk assessment centers, which have placed Peru among investment grade countries.

Peru has developed a huge network of investment, trade and partnership treaties, among which the economic partnership agreement signed with Japan, in force since last March, stands out. This economical tool for a long-lasting engagement unlocks new business possibilities to catapult even higher the cur-

rent trade fundamentals as the \$3.39 million in accumulated trade in 2011. Within 10 years, almost 100 percent of the trade between both countries will be in the zero tariff basket, ensuring that the commerce of Japanese vehicles, mobiles, computers or TVs, as well as Peruvian coffee, avocados, paprika, mangoes, asparagus, fish, fabrics or textiles, will continue to grow.

Whereas this strong relationship didn't start with the signing of a treaty, the confluence between both countries' paths has created a unique "nikkei" influence that has shaped part of Peruvian society. The current Peruvian "nikkei" (of Japanese descent) population is estimated at over 100,000, and, in spite of differences within generations, this population has a high level of education among professions such as engineering, accounting, medicine, education and administration.

Last May, acknowledging the singular status that the Japanese-Peruvian relationship has, President Ollanta Humala chose Japan as the first country to be visited in the Asian region. In this significant three-day visit, President

Humala was received in audience by His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito, who hosted a court luncheon in his honor. The Peruvian president held talks with Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and met with Takahiro Yokomichi, speaker of the Lower House of the Diet. On the economic and cooperation field, President Humala addressed Japanese investors, opened an investment promotion road show in Tokyo called "Peru: A country of opportunities," and met with the president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Peruvian president wrapped up the visit to Japan having secured up to \$250 million worth of loans for infrastructure projects.

To sum up, the links between our two nations are stronger than ever and, with the new compromises that Peru and Japan have set, there will be even more to celebrate in the near future. On behalf of all the diplomats and staff that work in the embassy as well as in the consulates, I would like to conclude this brief message by wishing all my compatriots in Japan the best in these national holidays.