

Panama independence day

Increasing development through several key projects

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AMBASSADOR OF PANAMA

On the occasion of the celebration of 109 years of our independence, the government and the people of Panama salute Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as the Japanese people and the international community.



It gives us great pleasure to inform about the successful visit of H.E. President Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal to Japan from Oct. 21 to 24. President Martinelli met with both private and government sectors, having the great honor to greet Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko in the company of the first lady of Panama Marta Linares de Martinelli. His visit is particularly significant for both countries, not only for the proximity to one of Panama's most important national holidays, but also because it happens after many years since the last time a president of Panama visited Japan for such an occasion. As a result of the visit, Panama and Japan signed a Memorandum on Political Consultations to further strengthen ties be-



Old town: Panama City's historic district of El Casco Viejo (left) has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1997. Panama, with its canal, plays an important role as a hub in the Americas for international trade. EMBASSY OF PANAMA

tween both countries in different fields. Through this instrument, Panama and Japan will be able to discuss issues of mutual interest on a regular basis. On this historical date of our independence, we remember the commotion in the neighborhoods of Panama City as cheers of joy were heard throughout the young metropolis. For the first time, in the afternoon of Nov. 3, 1903, the Municipal Council of Panama City met by the will of the people to be free and to establish a government of its own, independent and sovereign. After these events, the fate of our country was forever changed by the agreement to build an interoceanic canal, an impressive work of engineering that was

finished in 1914 and that will celebrate both its 100 years of existence and the completion of an expansion mega-project in just a few years. This expansion is the answer to an ever-increasing demand for more efficient global commercial exchanges. Now well into the third year of its term, President Martinelli's Administration's main projects are developing favorably and many other smaller, yet not less important, undertakings have met their deadlines and objectives. One example is the effective reduction of crime and drug-related activities, as evidenced in the reports of the Integrated National Statistics System. Since last year, Panama has appeared in 40th place in the



global competitiveness ranking, according to the Center for Global Competitiveness and Performance, an outstanding achievement by the government and the private sector. This ranking was presented in the World Economic Forum Study on Panama, where efforts to place the country as the second most competitive economy in the Latin American region were highly praised. The Cold Chain, a program meant to offer citizens a clean, organized, proper infrastructure to carry out the sale of fresh products has advanced 43 percent toward completion. This project, promoted by President Martinelli's administration, seeks to modernize the distribution of food for the benefit of the coun-

try's residents. Reducing spoilage and prolonging produce life, it should impact the cost to the end consumer directly. A side effect of the capital's fast growth is traffic congestion, one of the most trying difficulties of modern Panama City residents. Safe, comfortable, fast and timely transportation are some of the objectives pursued by the first line of the Panama Metro, a project born with President Martinelli's administration. It has primarily a north-south orientation and it will link the National Bus Terminal Station with one of the largest commercial centers north of the metropolitan city. Currently in the third and fourth phases of construction, which include the reorganization of public ser-

vices and the construction of all the stations, both underground and above, this line will be approximately 13.7 km long and have 16 stations. The first line of the Panama Metro is part of the Master Plan that comprises the design of the future metro lines of the city. The Metro's Master Route presents the design of a transportation system to service the entire capital. It includes three metro lines, a train and a tramway over the coastline, to be fully implemented by 2035.

Panama is committed to developing the public transportation system as a path to enhancing the quality of life of all of its inhabitants. The Cold Chain, the building of the metro system, the Metro Bus project, the expansion of Tocumen International Airport and the construction of new international airports are only a few of the big ventures being carried out by the current administration. On a commemorative note, Panama is getting ready to celebrate next year the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Southern Sea, known today as the Pacific Ocean, by Spaniard Vasco Nunez de Balboa. As a result of this discovery, Panama was globally positioned as a center for communications, logistics and commerce in the Americas, starting a process that is still taking place today. Panama continues to welcome the prosperity, economic

development and social stability brought about by the forces that shape this modern country: a democratic government, the results-oriented style of leadership practiced by the President of Panama H.E. Martinelli, the


expansion of the Panama Canal, the construction of the first line of the Metro system and many other endeavors that promise to increase the quality of life of the people of this small, yet remarkable country.

Congratulations

on the 109th Anniversary of

the Independence of

the Republic of Panama



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