

Iceland National Day Special

Sharing valuable lessons worldwide

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AMBASSADOR OF ICELAND



Today, on June 17, Iceland celebrates its 75th anniversary as an independent nation. It gives me great pleasure to address you as Iceland's ambassador to Japan, in this first year of Reiwa.

In Iceland, and around the world, the Icelandic people will celebrate the day with their family and friends, participating in parades and events — and with music, food and fireworks.

Today, we also celebrate that in the 75 years that have passed since its declaration of independence, Iceland has emerged as a confident Nordic welfare state, engaged in global affairs and punching well above its weight — with a population that is one of the happiest in the world. And, at the center of this change has been the sustainable development of our resources in the sea

and under the ground.

Last month Iceland's Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir established a cross-cutting dialogue platform between Iceland's government and the private sector in Iceland, to tackle climate change and introduce green solutions. Just like Japan, Iceland has realized that tackling climate change will require active engagement of the private sector.

It is the hope of the government of Iceland that our experience with the sustainable management of our resources can serve as an example for countries in various stages of development around the world.

This year saw Iceland take up leading roles in multiple regional and global cooperations.

As for the most important one, for the next two years, Iceland will be chairing the increasingly important Arctic Council. The theme of the Arctic Council Chairmanship program for 2019-2021 reflects Iceland's commitment to the principle of sustainable development and refers to the necessity of close cooperation between the states and peoples of the region and beyond. With

sustainable development as an overarching theme, Iceland will highlight four priorities — the Arctic marine environment, climate and green energy solutions, people and communities of the Arctic and a stronger Arctic Council.

For the last 10 years, Iceland has topped the gender equality index of the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report and gender issues will continue to play a large role in our foreign policy. We look forward to imparting some of our most valuable lessons to our partners around the world.

Iceland and Japan enjoy an ever-strengthening relationship, founded on the principles of rule of law, free and open economic cooperation and human rights. Japan has also historically been Iceland's most important trading partner in Asia since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956.

Currently, our trading relationship is as strong as ever, with new and exciting industries taking an ever-increasing share of our bilateral trade.

The Arctic is another avenue of increased collaboration between Iceland and Japan. Just last month, Icelandic Minister of Edu-



cation, Science and Culture Lilja D. Alfredsdottir visited Japan, in preparation for the two countries' co-hosting of the biannual Arctic Science Ministerial Meeting, to be held in Tokyo in the fall of 2020.

Other bilateral ministerial visits include a visit by Icelandic Foreign Minister Gudlaugur Thor Thordarson to Japan in May 2018 and then a visit by Foreign Minister Taro Kono to Iceland in October 2018 for the Arctic Circle Forum, held in Reykjavik.

I wish to convey my best wishes to the people of Japan for a prosperous era and the continued strengthening of the links between our countries.

SNS accounts of the ambassador and the embassy:
[@EFlygenring](#) and [@IcelandEmbTokyo](#)

Foreign Minister Taro Kono and Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir at the Arctic Circle conference in Reykjavik in October.

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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 Occasion of the 75th Icelandic National Day

 **Mitsubishi Corporation**