

Cuba National Day Special

Exchanges prosper in diplomacy, athletics

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On Jan. 1, the Republic of Cuba, on its National Day, celebrates the 61st anniversary of the revolution, which signifies the completion of more than a century of struggles of the Cuban people for their true and definitive independence. Since then, the firm determination to build a nation with everyone and for the good of all has prevailed.

On such a significant date, I am honored to convey on behalf of the Cuban people and government, our best wishes for peace and prosperity in the Reiwa Era to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, Empress Masako and other members of the imperial family, as well as the government and people of Japan.

Dec. 21 marked the 90th anniversary of

the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and its celebration contributed to continued strengthening of the friendship that unites us, through mutual appreciation, respect and trust.

In recent years, particularly since the visits of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Havana and President Miguel Diaz-Canel to Japan in 2016, bilateral ties have undergone a relaunch in multiple areas, including trade and cooperation growth, the consolidation of political dialogue and the expansion of scientific, academic, cultural and sports exchanges. The mutual will to deepen bilateral ties persists, for the benefit of our peoples and taking into account our common challenges and interests.

Evidence of the above is the active exchange of governmental and institutional delegations in both directions. Last year, Vice President of the Council of Ministers Roberto Morales attended the enthronement ceremony of the emperor, and his agenda included a visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. We also received

the Cuban minister of sports, who discussed the participation of Cuban athletes in training bases before the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games through the host cities program. In Havana, we welcomed Deputy Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kazuyuki Yamazaki and President of the Japan-Cuba Parliamentary Friendship League Keiji Furuya as special envoy of the prime minister.

To the citizens of the world, we extend our warmest invitation to visit Cuba, confident that they will enjoy its natural beauty, cultural values and historical heritage, and where a hospitable and cheerful people await you.

I would like to reiterate our gratitude for the multiple expressions of solidarity with Cuba from organizations, parliamentarians, political parties and Japanese society in general. We especially appreciate Japan's support to Cuba's demand for the immediate end of the United States' economic, commercial and financial blockade, the most prolonged, unjust and severe sanctions sys-

tem ever applied against any country, and that was condemned for the 28th consecutive occasion at the United Nations General Assembly.

2019 was a very significant year for Cuba, since a new constitution was approved by popular referendum and came into force. Its draft text underwent scrutiny by millions of our citizens, a clear sign of the democratic nature of the revolution, where the main decisions that define the life of the nation have the contribution of all Cubans, inside and outside the island.

In the stage of continuity and change that the constitution opened in Cuba, under the premise of building an increasingly socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable society, the commitment to foster the ties that bind us to Japan will always persevere.

I take this opportunity to wish success to the Japanese government and people in the celebration of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, in which Cuba will actively participate and that we are certain will be the best in history.



Trinidad in central Cuba developed throughout the Spanish colonial period as a trade port for sugar. The town is also a UNESCO World Heritage site. EMBASSY OF CUBA

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



Above: Music is a part of the Cuban identity; one may find locals playing instruments and singing in various places. Left: Cuba boasts many pristine sandy beaches. EMBASSY OF CUBA

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*on the National Day of
the Republic of Cuba*




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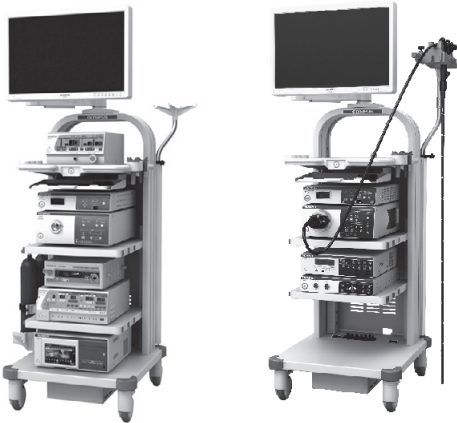
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