

Iceland National Day Special

Leading the way in sustainability

ELIN FLYGENRING
AMBASSADOR OF ICELAND



On June 17, Iceland celebrates its National Day — a day of celebration of the nation's history and heritage.

Iceland is a country that has flourished and thrived in the age of globalization — a country that has found that size alone does not dictate your level of influence on the world stage. By setting strong examples and standing by its principles of human rights, democracy and rule of law, Iceland has surely and steadily found its voice.

The 76th anniversary of Iceland's independence from Denmark is now celebrated amid the coronavirus pandemic, which has brought unprecedented challenges to com-

munities around the world, surely ushering in a drastic change in the way we live and work.

The pandemic has tested Iceland's resilience and character. Robust early steps taken by our public health care system together with private Icelandic companies, such as the use of innovative digital solutions and testing of about 15 percent of the Icelandic population, resulted in Iceland being free of new infections for more than a month.

Already, ambitious measures are being introduced to protect households and businesses, including our hard-hit tourism sector. However, Iceland opened its borders on June 15 to most international arrivals, and no one has to quarantine if they take a COVID-19 test at the airport. Already one of the safest countries in the world, a virus-free Iceland will make for a superb tourist destination.

Iceland has the goal of being a leading country in sustainability. The country, known for the sustainable use of its energy

and marine resources is also home to leading innovative technology companies in marine and health tech, biotech, medical devices and pharmaceutical development.

Iceland has one of the highest percentages of young people studying abroad. However, there is no brain drain as people tend to come back to the country. With incoming influences from far and near, Iceland has managed to keep high standards in various fields and embrace diversity.

Japan is one of Iceland's most important global partners — an essential strategic ally. Our countries share common values and a vision of a free and open global economy. This understanding was shared in a recent phone call between our ministers of foreign affairs.

The post-coronavirus world will bring great national and global challenges — and it is only with strong cooperation guided by an optimistic vision of the future and respect for our international system that we will succeed.

Innovation opening new doors in technology fields

LOFTUR THORARINSSON
CHAIRMAN OF THE ICELANDIC
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN



The Icelandic Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ISCCJ), established in 2003, is the main business advocacy organization for Icelandic business interests in Japan.

Since its founding, the ISCCJ has been instrumental in facilitating deeper economic cooperation between Iceland and Japan.

For decades, bilateral trade and investment between our two countries has rested on our historically strong industries, including Iceland's fisheries and energy and Japan's automobiles and electronics. This trade forms the backbone of the good relationship between Iceland and Japan.

In recent years, however, we see an increased volume of both trade and invest-

ments in new industries — in innovation and technology. Exciting startups and growth companies in new sectors are venturing to Japan, with innovative products and solutions — something we hope to see more of with the opening of the new Nordic Innovation House in Tokyo.

Iceland is growing as a hub for young professionals looking to locate to a country with the highest quality of life, a good

work-life balance, where one can live in close proximity to Iceland's fantastic nature.

Iceland will keep on building on its strengths — its nature, people, sustainability and innovation — and engaging with its most important global partners, like Japan.

The ISCCJ wishes all Icelanders a happy national day!

For more information, see www.isccj.org.

ISCCJ

Icelandic Chamber of Commerce in Japan

在日アイスランド商工会議所

Congratulations
on the Occasion of the Icelandic National Day

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