

Georgia Independence Day Special

Maintaining traditions as society progresses

TEIMURAZ LEZHAVA
AMBASSADOR OF GEORGIA



On May 26, Georgians celebrate the 104th anniversary of the restoration of our statehood. Exactly 104 years ago, Georgia declared independence and established the First Democratic Republic of Georgia. Our nation chose its way to peaceful and democratic development, to create a free country, with free people, respecting the rule of law, democracy and human rights. Unfortunately, the first republic ceased to exist as a result of the Soviet Occupation in 1921, until we regained our freedom in 1991.

It must be underlined that Japan was one of the first countries to recognize the inde-

pendence of Georgia both during the first republic as well as after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This year we are delighted to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. Japan has always been a loyal friend and valuable partner to our nation, supporting Georgians in the hardest times throughout our journey to building democratic institutions and a sustainable economy. Thanks to our international friends and the dedication of Georgian society, we managed to overcome all obstacles in an incredibly short period, making us one of the most progressive countries in the region.

According to prominent international rankings, Georgia is one of the safest countries in the world, with one of the most liberal and flexible tax systems, an exceptionally positive investment climate and a business-friendly government. Situated in a geopolitically important area, we form a natural crossroads of globally impor-

tant trading routes, pipelines and transnational infrastructure projects. Georgia is an economic, trade and logistics hub with free-trade regimes with almost all the important stakeholders around, including the European Union, Turkey, China and others. There is up-to-date information about Georgia's economy and business climate on our new website (<https://georgia-keizai.com>). At the same time, we are proud of our unique culture, history, traditions, amazing cuisine and oldest traditions of winemaking in the world. Yes, we are the homeland of wine. The first wine was made in the territory of Georgia about 8,000 years ago.

We are also proud of our exceptionally diverse nature and mesmerizing landscapes. The congruence of these makes Georgia one of the most rapidly growing touristic destinations, attracting millions of tourists from all around the planet. During the pandemic, when tourists had limited means of visiting Georgia, *shkmeruli* (chicken in garlic milk) and other Georgian dishes gained increasing popularity in Japan, attracting more interest to our cuisine, history and culture. This led to the establishment of a Georgian culture lover's club, called Tamada no Kai, which has around 600 members. Informa-

tion about the club can be found at www.gaumarjos.jp. There are also many interesting facts about Georgia on our tourism website (<https://letsgeorgia.com>).

Georgia and Japan have many important similarities. We both are among the oldest countries, with exceptional cultures of hospitality. Both our nations succeeded in preserving their traditions in parallel with their transitions into modern societies. Most importantly, we have exemplary positive political and economic relationships. Last year, Japan and Georgia signed a bilateral investment treaty and an agreement for the avoidance of double taxation. We have since witnessed increased interest from Japanese companies in doing business in Georgia.

In the end, I would like to again express words of gratitude to our friends in Japan for their important contribution to the development of Georgia, for engaging in extremely positive political, economic and cultural relationships, and for the support of our sovereignty and territorial integrity. I'm absolutely sure that the already excellent relationship between our countries will become even closer and more cordial in the years to come. *Gaumarjos* (cheers).



Gergeti Trinity Church sits near Mount Kazbegi.
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Mtskheta, the former capital of Georgia EMBASSY OF GEORGIA



The Alaverdi Monastery is known for its architecture and winemaking.
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Congratulations to the people of Georgia on their Independence Day



NS Semicon Co., Ltd.
<http://www.nssemicon.com/>
info@nssemicon.com



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JAPAN TOBACCO INC.
Kamiyacho Trust Tower, 1-1, Toranomon 4-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-6927 JAPAN
Phone: (03) 6636-2914 FAX: (03) 6772-0495 URL: <http://www.jt.com>

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