

Papua New Guinea National Day Special

Special economic zones welcome investors

SAMUEL ABAL
AMBASSADOR OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Today marks 49 years of independence for Papua New Guinea, which received it graciously from Australia on Sept. 16, 1975.

The gracious "giving ceremony" held by the Australian side was graciously received in a similar ceremony by Papua New Guineans on this date less than 50 years ago.

On a personal note, let me add that I had just come down from the highlands like many others to start university. It didn't matter because we students should have been going about our business of schooling, but we are "highlanders" and this was war, or so it seemed.

I must add a personal note on this recollection, because it was my father, the

late Sir Tei Abal, who was the opposition leader at the time while the late Sir Michael T. Somare was prime minister.

As most Papua New Guineans of the time would testify, it was a moment of great excitement because a very diverse nation of over 1,000 tribes speaking some 860 languages was trying to decide how it could come together to form a unified nation — truly unity in diversity.

Many may remember that this period in the late 1950s and '60s was a time of seeking freedom from the evils of colonialism and independence as witnessed in Africa, Asia and Latin America. So for PNG, independence was a foregone conclusion.

Perhaps by then many could have finished university and worked with the Australians at least for five years before independence. But as it is we have come a long way, and this just allows us to review and realize at the end that it was thanks to God that it happened as it did.

Praise to God indeed, as we will celebrate 50 years of independence as a sov-

ereign Christian nation!

At the university there were debates and discussions on independence, but they were never fiery or nationalistic. There was some sort of serenity there, and as I was a student at the time, I can surely testify that there never was any animosity between the different groups having conversations on the issue of independence.

God blessed our country by protecting us with our resources. Some 97% of PNG land remains owned by villages, and we are now opening up through different economic programs, including special economic zones where Japanese and foreign businesses can own or rent and establish their businesses.

Those interested should get in touch with the embassy.
Thank you.

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




Left: The Papuan hornbill is endemic to Papua New Guinea. Right: People fish at sunset in Kimbe.

GETTY IMAGES

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to the People of Papua New Guinea
on the Occasion of the Anniversary of Their Independence

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will be renamed

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On 1 January 2025, JX Nippon Oil & Gas Exploration will be renamed ENEOS Xplora.

https://www.eneos-xplora.com/company_name/index_e.html

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