

Paraguay National Day Special

Shared values, aspirations anchor long-lasting friendship

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This year, Paraguay commemorates the 214th anniversary of its independence on May 14 and 15 — a proud milestone that celebrates the courage, determination and vision of a people who chose freedom and self-governance in 1811.

It is especially meaningful this year as Paraguay's National Day coincides with the historic official visit of President Santiago Pena to Japan, marking a new chapter in the long and trusted friendship between our nations.

Paraguay and Japan are united not only by diplomatic ties, but by the shared values of democracy, respect for international law, free and fair trade and a belief in cooperation among equals. These values are more than words — they have shaped a relationship forged over generations, beginning with the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to Paraguay in 1936. As we approach the 90th anniversary of that migration in 2026, we celebrate a legacy that has brought our peoples together in purpose and spirit.

The Japanese immigrant community contributed greatly to Paraguay's development, especially in agriculture, bringing along their traditions of harmony, perseverance and discipline. Today, their descendants — the Nikkei community — are central to Paraguay's global role as a major food producer, particularly in soy, beef and grains. Their cultural and economic contributions to the country have built a living



The Mirador del Cerro Akati vantage point offers panoramic views of the town of Independencia in Guira, Paraguay. FERNANDO FRANCESCHELLI

bridge between Paraguay and Japan.

That bond has also been defined by profound acts of solidarity. In the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, the Paraguayan Nikkei community donated soybeans to produce 1 million packs of tofu for those affected. More recently, in 2024, they once again stood with Japan, raising significant funds through the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations to support victims of the Noto Peninsula earthquake. These gestures reflect a relationship grounded not just in history, but in compassion and enduring friendship.

Paraguay is a proudly *shinnichi* (pro-Japan) nation — a true friend to Japan in

the international arena. Through consistent and concrete support in multilateral organizations and global forums, Paraguay has stood unequivocally with Japan in defense of sovereignty, peace and international law.

Paraguay's history has not been without hardship. As a nation that has at times lived in isolation and endured devastating wars — including one that decimated nearly 90% of its male population — Paraguay knows, much like Japan, the high cost of conflict and the fragility of peace. These painful experiences have forged a deep national understanding of the importance of dialogue, diplomacy, multilateralism, free trade and democracy. In today's global



Itaipu Dam, the third-largest hydroelectric dam in the world, sits on the Parana River.



Left: Palacio de Lopez in Asuncion is the seat of Paraguay's government. Right: The Saltos del Monday waterfall is one of the main draws at the national Municipal Park Monday.



context, where these principles are increasingly challenged, both nations stand firm in reaffirming the lessons that history taught the world — and that must never be forgotten or repeated.

Pena's visit also comes at a time of global reflection as the world marks 80 years since the end of World War II. Japan's postwar transformation into a peaceful and principled global leader offers inspiration to Paraguay — a country that has embraced

democracy, stability and international cooperation as pillars of its national project.

This visit marks a strategic turning point. As a gateway to the Mercosur trading bloc and a leader in renewable energy and agriculture, Paraguay offers Japan a bridge to South America's expanding markets. With the development of the Bioceanic Corridor, Paraguay is poised to become a vital logistics hub connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, providing Japan with new oppor-

tunities for safe and efficient trade routes.

Paraguay's participation in the Osaka Expo will further elevate this relationship. Under the theme "Ikigai Paraguay: Energy that Connects," Paraguay will pay tribute to the Nikkei legacy while presenting itself as a nation living its purpose in a rapidly changing world — a purpose rooted in sustainability, openness and meaningful global engagement.

As Paraguay celebrates its National Day, the arrival of Pena in Japan is more than symbolic — it is a powerful affirmation of the deep friendship, mutual respect and strategic alignment between our countries. In an increasingly changing and complex world, Paraguay and Japan stand together — united by shared values, and committed to building a future of peace, prosperity and human connection.

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

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on the Occasion of

the Anniversary of

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