

# Iceland National Day Special

## Enduring ties bolster equality, sustainability

**STEFAN HAUKUR JOHANNESSEN**  
AMBASSADOR OF ICELAND



As Iceland commemorates its National Day on June 17, we reflect on the enduring friendship between Iceland and Japan, recently highlighted during the Osaka Expo.

The Nordic Pavilion, a collaborative effort among Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, served as a platform to showcase shared values and cultural heritage. On May 29, Iceland's National Day at the Expo featured a program centered on "Peace and Equality," underscoring our nation's commitment to these principles.

President Halla Tomasdottir's visit to Japan marked a significant moment in our bilateral relations. Her participation in events at the expo emphasized Iceland's dedication to gender equality and sustainable development. At the United Nations Pavilion, she joined discussions with young people, addressing topics related to peace, the sustainable development goals and the future. Following that,

she engaged in a fireside chat focusing on women's empowerment and gender equality at the Women's Pavilion WA Space.

The cultural segment of Iceland's National Day featured performances by renowned Icelandic artists, including Asgeir, JFDR, and composer Gabriel Olafs, offering expo visitors a glimpse of Iceland's vibrant music scene. The Nordic Pavilion itself, a sustainable wooden structure designed by Nordic architects, symbolizes the timeless and eco-conscious mindset shared by the Nordic countries.

The expo also provided an opportunity to strengthen Iceland-Japan relations beyond cultural exchange. Collaboration on renewable energy, particularly geothermal power, was discussed, highlighting shared commitments to sustainable development.

During her visit, Tomasdottir was received in audience by his majesty the emperor of Japan and held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba. These high-level exchanges reaffirmed the strong and friendly ties between Iceland and Japan.

Tomasdottir's leadership reflects Ice-

land's progressive stance on gender equality. As the nation's second female president, she continues the legacy of her predecessor, Vigdis Finnbogadottir, the world's first democratically elected female head of state. Iceland maintains its position at the forefront of global gender equality initiatives. To showcase Iceland's global commitment to this issue, the president further engaged in discussions revolving around gender equality with Japanese female parliamentarians at Tsuda University, followed by a discussion



The Myrdalsjokull ice cap is a glacier that sits atop the active Katla volcano north of the Icelandic town of Vik i Myrdal.

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with students at the university, where the mayor of Reykjavik also joined in.

As we celebrate Iceland's National Day, we acknowledge the deepening ties between our nations, built on mutual respect, shared values and a commitment

to a sustainable and equitable future.

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



**President Halla Tomasdottir (center) and her spouse pose with Ambassador to Japan Stefan Haukur Johannessen (fifth from right) and other envoys and delegates from Business Iceland at the Osaka Expo's Nordic Pavillion on May 29.**  
THE NORDIC PAVILLION

## Congratulations on the Occasion of the Icelandic National Day



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