

Papua New Guinea National Day Special

Celebrating our history, inspiring our future

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Papua New Guinea will celebrate its Golden Jubilee on Sept. 16. The event's theme, "Celebrate Our History, Inspire Our Future," encapsulates the nation's unity in diversity, journey of reflection

and forward-looking commitment to progress and prosperity as the nation marks 50 years of independence.

Five decades ago on this day, Papua New Guinea gracefully lowered the Australian flag, folded and returned it with dignity and proudly raised its own flag in bright colors of red, black and gold for the first time, signifying its birth as a new nation.

At independence, PNG adopted a foreign policy based on "universalism" and being "friends to all and enemies to none."

This foreign policy stance sent a simple message that as a new nation, PNG needed friends and wanted to make friends and interact on the global stage.

On the day of its independence, PNG truly lived up to its foreign policy stance by establishing diplomatic relations with eight friendly countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Indonesia, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Japan.

This year, as PNG celebrates its Golden Jubilee, it also celebrates five decades of diplomatic relations with Japan and the seven other friendly countries.

Fifty years on, PNG's national flag, which bears the symbol of its national bird, the bird-of-paradise, alongside five stars, is not only flown in its own sovereign territory — it has also spread its wings and flown out into the world. PNG now flies its flag proudly at 23 locations in 19 countries at its high commissions, embassies and consulate general offices around the globe.

Establishing official diplomatic relations with Japan upon PNG's indepen-

dence merely reinforced a relationship that already existed, since Japanese official development assistance had been present in PNG in 1974. Last year, PNG and Japan celebrated 50 years of the Japan International Cooperation Agency's presence in PNG.

Japan has remained PNG's constant and significant development partner for 50 years. Mutual trust and understanding remain the key pillars of Japan and PNG's bilateral relations, which continue to be strengthened through cooperation in key areas, including national development, infrastructure, social and educational programs, tourism, technical cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

Moving into the next chapter of this partnership, the challenges are endowed with limitless opportunities. There is a need to consolidate, strengthen and further explore these opportunities by taking stock of how we have fared over the last 50 years and reset our relationship going forward.

Together, PNG and Japan can chart a way forward by capitalizing on each other's strengths and competitive advantages, not

only at the government-to-government level but, more importantly, through the engagement of private-sector companies that are the engines of growth.

God bless PNG-Japan relations and happy 50 years of diplomatic relations.

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



The Raggiana bird-of-paradise is depicted on the flag of Papua New Guinea.

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on the Occasion of the Anniversary of Their Independence

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