

St. Patrick's Day Special

Shared values a cornerstone of relationship

DAMIEN COLE
AMBASSADOR OF IRELAND



Each year, Ireland's national day on March 17 is celebrated by 70 million people of Irish heritage and by our friends and partners around the world, including here in Japan.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Department of Transport Minister of State, Sean Canney, who will be the Irish government's representative at this year's St. Patrick's Day events in Japan. During an intensive program, he will engage with political, economic and cultural counterparts and lead the 30th St. Patrick's Day Parade in Tokyo on March 15.

I am delighted that the diverse and vibrant program of the Tokyo Parade on Omotesando-dori and the Green Ireland Festival in Yoyogi Park combine to represent the oldest and largest annual St. Patrick's Day celebration in Asia.

Beyond Tokyo, lively community groups, marching bands, parades and the illumination of landmarks in green from Yokohama to Matsue, Shimane Prefecture, and from Sapporo to Kumamoto will bring the Irish spirit to cities across Japan.

This annual festival is a time to reflect on the strong political, economic, cultural and academic partnerships that have brought Ireland and Japan closer together.

Ireland's relationship with Japan reached an important milestone last July with the official opening, by our Taoiseach Micheal Martin, of Ireland House in Yotsuya, Tokyo. This exciting new hub in the capital houses the embassy as well as government agencies and a state-of-the-art event space. It reflects Ireland's ongoing commitment to the bilateral relationship with Japan.



Transport State Minister Sean Canney

Ireland is also continuing the legacy of our award-winning pavilion at the Osaka Expo, which reminded Japanese visitors of Ireland's rich culture, stunning landscapes and renowned hospitality, as well as highlighting opportunities for advancing business, trade and academic ties.

As a small, highly open trading economy with a strong global outlook, Ireland is committed to the value of an open and fair trading system. Free and fair trade brings economic opportunities, creates well-paid jobs, fosters innovation and builds economic resilience — essential for small states like Ireland to thrive and prosper.

A shared commitment to the rules-based international order makes Japan Ireland's most important partner in Asia. This is particularly true of economic relations, trade and investment. The benefits of our economic ties flow in both directions. Two-way trade between Japan and Ireland now stands at €23 billion (¥4.2 trillion).

Direct investment from Japanese com-

panies into Ireland continues to grow, particularly in the areas of semiconductors, technology services, financial services and medical technology. We are delighted to see this progress, as demonstrated by Astellas' recent announcement to invest €129 million across its three Ireland sites, and by Sony Interactive Entertainment's announcement to establish a 100-person digital innovation and engineering center in Ireland.

We are also deepening cooperation on the green agenda through new partnerships in areas such as alternative energy and electricity grid management, supporting our shared ambition for a sustainable future. Irish innovation is finding its way to Japan and continues to attract growing interest from Japanese companies.

Ireland and Japan also share a deep commitment to international peace and security, and to a rules-based multilateral system. As Ireland prepares to assume the six-month presidency of the European Union from July, we look forward to shaping these shared values with our EU partners, as well as our trade, research and people-to-people links.

Japan's recent accession to the Horizon Europe research and innovation program is just one of the many exciting opportunities for mutual collaboration within the EU framework that we hope to advance.

The many events taking place in Tokyo and around Japan this month are a testament to the hard work and dedication of the Irish community and friends of Ireland in Japan. I urge everyone to don something green and join in the fun. Without a doubt, Japan is one of the best places in the world to celebrate St. Patrick's Day!

Beannachtai na Feile Pádraig daoibh go leir (happy St. Patrick's Day to all)!

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



The Magnus Rinn sculpture by artist Joseph Walsh, relocated to Chionin Temple in Kyoto after welcoming visitors to the Ireland Pavilion at the Osaka Expo, aims to foster bilateral cultural connections and dialogue.

EMBASSY OF IRELAND



With its opening in 2025, Ireland House has become the face of the country in Japan.

JONATHAN SAVOIE

Happy St. Patrick's Day from Team Ireland in Japan!



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HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

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